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The Second International: A Reexamination

by Andrew Arato

1. *Introduction*

The history of the Marxism of the Second International is not over and done with. Theirs is the classical version of the theory: no politically significant Marxism, such as Bolshevism, Trotskyism or Maoism, departed from them on the most general questions of philosophy and social theory. Only an investigation that is both social and intellectual history could fully show how and why a version of the theory that hardly exhausts, and in part falsifies, the theoretical project of Karl Marx managed to express the immediate interests of the industrial working class—the social stratum to which all political Marxisms have been inevitably drawn—and why the philosophy of praxis that projected a link between the objective possibilities of the present and a liberated future almost always has been politically irrelevant. Only a new social theory, signs of which are already present, could show under what conditions the philosophy of praxis could contribute to its own political relevance. The aim of this study is far less global. I believe that liberation from the past presupposes its understanding, that the renaissance of Marxism demands the isolation and analysis of its false, misleading or misdirected interpretations. Here, I will try to examine only one very crucial part of the past of socialism that must be understood before it can be finally "destroyed," preserving all of its dimensions that can help us concretely, either as a way of showing what to avoid when we try to reconstruct the dialectical theory of society or as a more positive clue that helps to clarify the foundation of our own Marxism. After all, the philosophy of praxis can stand only on the foundation of the self-critique of Marxism, and fifty years after the publication of *History and Class Consciousness* we are still, for good historical reasons, in a sorry position where the self-critique of Marxism still must be a critique of objectivism, determinism, of the mechanical interpretation of the dialectic, of reductionism, of substantialism, of evolutionism, and of a dogmatic social theory whose concepts have lost all relationship to the world we live in. My procedure will be the following. I will first go through the development of the social theory of German Social Democracy from the linear, deterministic, and increasingly gradualistically matured theory of the founders (Engels, Kautsky, etc.) to the empiricist dissolution of both determinism and revolution by Bernstein, and especially to Rosa Luxemburg's implicit rediscovery of the dual (antinomic) ontology that

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* This project heavily draws on a joint project with Jean Cohen during the summer of 1972.

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Marx himself never completely overcame. While on the level of social theory Luxemburg came closer to Marx's intentions than anyone before her, on the level of philosophy she shared the worst aspects of the determinism of social democracy. Hence, she could not even see beyond the rigid juxtaposition of freedom and necessity, subject and object, in her social theory. The question of the dialectic implicitly arises from this problem. Thus, secondly I will consider the fate of the dialectic in the philosophies of the Second International, moving between a voluntarism and a determinism, both of which (and even their antinomic combination by Max Adler) exclude precisely the dialectic.

2. *The Social Theory of German Social Democracy*

The Erfurt Program of 1891 was the seed from which the basic elements of the internal controversies of German Social Democracy for the next twenty years could be unfolded.[1] It is traditional to point to the rupture between the theoretical first part of the program, outlining both the development of capitalism toward collapse and the necessity of an increasingly oppressed working class to take power and effect socialist transformation, and the practical second part, outlining a program of democratic reforms, apparently within the framework of the existing social-political order.[2] Nevertheless, there were two fundamental links between these parts. The ground of the first link was the social-political reality of the German Empire, a country where there never was a successful bourgeois revolution, where (in spite of the vast success of industrialization) the industrial bourgeoisie did not hold political power, where democratic parliamentarism was a mere form from the point of view of all classes, and where, given the power and intransigence of reaction, democracy was still a revolutionary slogan.[3] To most German Social Democrats, the struggle for democracy was intimately related as a prerequisite (Kautsky), as a moment (Luxemburg), or as the same thing (Bernstein) to the struggle for socialism. However, there was also a second link between the two parts of the Erfurt Program, namely a deterministic social theory that ultimately expected a revolutionary conjuncture of the downward development of capitalism and the upward development of proletarian class consciousness. I will examine the fate primarily of this second link, although the problem of democracy will have to be one of the dimensions even of the basic theoretical problem.

German Social Democracy, i.e. the Erfurt Program, inherited its conception of the revolutionary process from the late Engels. In spite of a

1. Our analysis will focus on the theoretical conflicts, and it will presuppose Carl E. Schorske's masterly analysis of political developments in *German Social Democracy: 1905-1917* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955).

2. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, op. cit.*, pp. 5-6; and George Lichtheim, *Marxism: An Historical and Critical Study* (New York: Praeger, 1961), p. 262.

3. Lichtheim shows quite nicely that it was the above link that enabled Engels to support the practical part of the Erfurt Program. Cf. *Marxism, op. cit.*, pp. 262-263.

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crucial reinterpretation (and de-emphasis) of the concept of class struggle, there is a direct line between the *Communist Manifesto* and the *Anti-Dühring*. Engels, of course, believed that his later work represented an exposition of Marx's late critique of political economy, but from various points of view this exposition can be shown to be rather superficial. In spite of his utilization of many of the categories of the critique of political economy, the overall framework (the movement of the categories) of the section of the *Anti-Dühring* dealing with capitalist development is far more similar to the *Communist Manifesto*, written almost twenty years earlier than *Capital*. This is the case in spite of some fundamental differences between the *Manifesto* and *Anti-Dühring*. It is well known that the *Manifesto* stressed the constantly renewed and explosive antagonism between new forces of production and old relations of production (property relations, exchange relations), i.e. between forces of production and the totality of social relations which tend to become the fetters of these forces. At the same time, the *Manifesto* places the class struggle into the center of all previous history. During the period of capitalism, the apparent contradiction between the two perspectives is resolved by the externalization of the fundamental contradiction in terms of a process of development that implies a cycle of expansion and overproduction on the one hand, and on the other the total subjugation of the proletariat to the industrial apparatus at times of economic expansion and the danger of the physical destruction of many of its members in periods of crisis. According to the *Manifesto*, after each crisis there is an increase in the size (given the impoverishment and gradual proletarianization of other classes) and potential power of the proletariat, and a decrease in its possibilities of life. In this theoretical framework, capitalism tends toward its own destruction (because of its immanent contradiction), but its *actual* destruction depends on the strength and solidarity of the proletariat.[4]

From the point of view of the *Communist Manifesto*, the *Anti-Dühring* merely places a somewhat de-emphasized class struggle in the context of a more comprehensive theory of development. However, when compared to the only completely finished part of the unfinished critique of political economy of Marx, i.e. the first volume of *Capital*, the class struggle tends to be (it is not always) merely a descriptive element in Engel's framework. It is true that the *Anti-Dühring* repeats the statement of the *Manifesto* that "all past history is the history of class struggles"; but it immediately adds: "those warring classes of society are always the product of the conditions of production and exchange...of the *economic* conditions of their time."[5]

4. The works of Rosa Luxemburg and Lukács' theory of reification were the earliest attempts to formulate such viewpoints. A general re-examination of the critique of political economy fully integrating the *Grundrisse* and the *Theories of Surplus Value* would be (when accomplished) a more adequate attempt in the same direction.

5. Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, trans. by Emile Burns (New York: International Publishers, 1939) p. 32.

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One could explain away this *reduction* of the class struggle to economic development as a mere repetition of the ambiguity of the *Communist Manifesto*. But in its expanded form, the ambiguity looks rather different. This can be best seen if we first look at Marx's *Capital*, volume I. In *Capital*, Marx struggled to set up a dialectical relationship between the transformation of the structure of labor and the forms of appearance of this transformation in political economy (i.e. bourgeois society). His abstract categories are chosen in such a way as to correspond to a whole series of the actual economic forms of appearance of bourgeois society—commodity, exchange, abstract labor, etc. At the same time those categories do not stand for eternal, immutable contents: an act of commodity exchange under feudalism is hardly the same as an act of commodity exchange under capitalism. Furthermore, capitalism turns out, in *Capital*, and also in the long, unpublished introduction to *Toward a Critique of Political Economy*, to be the first society that tends to produce the pure forms of several important economic categories: pure commodity (in the context of general commodity exchange), pure abstract labor (in a system that really reduces labor to a common denominator), etc. But the essential basis of these *pure* economic manifestations is a historically transformed one; general commodity exchange (unlike accidental commodity exchange) rests not on simple commodity production but on modern cooperation and division of labor, and the system of abstract labor no longer rests on a system that still produces wealth (although it tends to so measure it) measurable by simple, average labor time.[6] The economic categories thus become restrictive forms, not only of the growth of new forces of production in general, but specifically of a radically transformed structure of labor. Futhermore, the above transformation of the structure of labor is the basis of the solidarity and activity of the class within the wage labor-capital relationship. In turn, this is one of the dynamic factors pushing toward internal transformation of the categories themselves. The successful struggle over the length of the working day on the part of the proletariat is the basis of the logical movement of the category of absolute surplus value—a change expressing a fundamental transformation of the structure of capitalism. The resistance of skilled workers is one of the historical factors within manufacture pointing toward machine industry. Marx never completed his investigation of the dialectic of the concrete and abstract, of essence and appearance, of labor and development in *Capital*. And he never managed to fully clarify the relationship of the dialectic of categories and the historical dialectic. But Engels altogether abandoned the attempt. Where Marx hesitantly (and not without self-contradiction) moved toward the dialectic of history in the relationship of the transformation of labor and the immanent laws of the abstract categories of each stage of transformation, Engels flattened out the

6. Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Oekonomie (Rohentwurf) 1857-1858* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1953), pp. 592-593.

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"anatomy" of history to deterministic laws of the abstract categories, of "appearances." As a result his representation of the overall structure of historical development became as deterministic as in the various schools of objectivistic naturalism. But, for someone who saw himself as the theoretician of a revolutionary proletarian party, objectivism presented a serious problem. Let us follow the fate of this problem in particular in the *Anti-Dühring* and in Kautsky's commentary on the Erfurt Program that was heavily dependent on Engels.

For the old Engels and for Kautsky, the mechanism of capitalist collapse seemed to depend of the "narrowing" spiral of the crisis of overproduction. It is not relevant here that one cannot really deduce general overproduction merely from disproportionalities in production resulting from the unplanned nature of production as a whole, as Kautsky believed.[7] In a more general form the point seems valid enough: the markets of capitalism do not have the same capacity for expansion as does its productivity, presumably because of the latter's utilization of large scale cooperation, planning and technological innovation.[8] In any case the general tendency of capitalism is overproduction, and each actual crisis of overproduction according to Engels results in the destruction of a part of the productive forces and the increasing concentration and monopolization of the industrial apparatus.[9] After each crisis fewer and fewer monopolies control production, and finally the state becomes the only monopoly.[10]

In Kautsky's analysis we find roughly the same theory of capitalist development, with some additions rather randomly drawn from various parts of *Capital*. He supports the tendency toward monopolization e.g. with Marx's "law" (*Capital*, Volume III) of the falling profit rate which implies an always increasing quantity of initial capital expenditure for constant capital (machines, plant, etc.). But he was willing to draw even more clear cut and absolute consequences from this tendency toward monopolization than Marx and Engels in their late works. He saw monopolization culminating in a two class society where an insignificant non-working minority *owns* everything, and a working majority *owns* next to nothing (except their labor power). As we will see, this vast oversimplification easily opened the Erfurt synthesis to Bernstein's empiricist attack. Since both Engels and Kautsky saw capitalism primarily as a particular system of property relations, they saw the transition from many owners to few owners to one owner (the state) as a linear movement toward collective ownership.[11]

7. Karl Kautsky, *The Class Struggle (Erfurt Program)* trans. by W. E. Bohn (New York: Norton, 1971) pp. 71ff; pp. 79ff.

8. Marx, unlike most of his followers, also stressed industrial despotism and hierarchy *enforcing* cooperation and creating the preconditions for planning. Cf. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital, Vol. I.*, in Marx, Engels *Werke. Vol. XXIII*, (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1968) p. 370; p. 377, etc.

9. Engels, *Anti-Dühring, op. cit.*, pp. 301-302.

10. *Ibid.* p. 304.

11. *Ibid.*, pp. 303ff.

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Kautsky could even draw the consequence that it was capitalism's own immanent law to destroy private ownership, by gradually decreasing the number of owners, by making the person of the capitalist totally superfluous, by transforming the whole productive apparatus into a single gigantic concern.[12] Elsewhere (very consistently and foreshadowing Lenin) he speaks of socialist society "as a single giant industrial concern,"[13] a suggestion for which Marx had nothing but irony in *Capital.*[14]

Nevertheless, neither Engels nor Kautsky developed a totally linear view of history. Their treatment of the modern state and their insistence that the revolutionary class must eventually seize state power represent to a limited extent a dialectical remnant in their theory. Engels generally tended to see the modern state as "essentially a capitalist machine," as "the ideal collective body of all the capitalists." And even when the actual members of the capitalist class become superfluous from the point of view of production, and are replaced by bureaucrats, the modern state according to Engels will drive the wage labor-capital relation to a final extreme. Here Engels, following the *Communist Manifesto*, assigns the final task of the overthrow of capitalism to the proletariat that was necessarily growing in size, concentration, consciousness and solidarity during the whole course of development. Given the state assuming the function of the collective capitalist, the proletariat has one task only, a task both political and economic, to seize state power.[15] Kautsky also recognized that the modern state, at least before the proletarian seizure of political power, would be a "superior exploiter of labor" than any private capitalist.[16] Thus no linear immanent development of capitalism can replace revolutionary seizure of power. In fact, Kautsky did not expect the linear development of monopolization to reach its logical end; a proletarian revolution would have to decide the issue earlier.[17] And conversely, in the absence of proletarian revolution, Kautsky saw (following the *Manifesto*) another choice for humanity, namely barbarism.[18]

But the above arguments do not substantially transform the linear, deterministic theory that Engels and Kautsky developed. At most, the line is cut into two segments, two stages. The first stage is that of capitalist development culminating in state capitalism. (In Kautsky this stage does not reach its end). In both Engels and Kautsky the first stage appears fully deterministic. The second stage is that of the proletarian conquest of power,

12. Kautsky, *The Class Struggle, op. cit.*, p. 68.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 138.
14. Marx, *Werke, XXIII, op. cit.*
15. Engels, *Anti-Dühring, op. cit.*, p. 306. This seizure of power, according to Engels, would first complete the nationalization of private property and thereby initiate a process that leads to the abolition of classes and the death of the state. The famous leap to the realm of freedom takes place *after* the seizure of power.
16. Kautsky, *The Class Struggle, op. cit.*, p. 110.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 87 and p. 118.

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which Engels understood as a leap from necessity to freedom, while Kautsky tended to understand it more deterministically. In both Engels and Kautsky the subjective factor (the proletariat) matures necessarily during the necessary course of development of the objective factor (growth of size, concentration, poverty, solidarity, consciousness), but Engels did not think he could completely derive the revolutionary act from these factors. In Kautsky we see two distinct levels of response to the same problem. On a first level, since he was an even better disciple of a Darwinian brand of deterministic naturalism than Engels, he could leave nothing to "will", "consciousness" or "leaps".[19] But on a second level, and especially in his theoretical commentary on the Erfurt program, the requirements of practical politics forced him to introduce a host of pragmatic transitions between objective development and ("revolutionary") political action. On the deterministic level, Kautsky finds a double tendency of proletarian development. The objective development of capitalism degrades, fragments, demoralizes the proletariat but it also embitters it, concentrates it, enforces its internal cooperation, and tends to homogenize it (ultimately reducing differences between skilled "labor aristocracy" and the unskilled workers, workers of different backgrounds etc.). But the respective weight of these divergent tendencies depends on specific historical conditions, and the final victory of the elevating tendency depends on the political struggle of the class. While Kautsky rejects reform (especially reforms initiated not by the proletariat) as a way of social transformation, his commentary on the Erfurt program strongly stressed reformist, parliamentary activity as a way of strengthening the progressive historical tendency of proletarian development, as the best way of building class consciousness.[20] He argued that without the democratic struggle for parliamentary rule and for civil liberties the economic struggle would be seriously hampered. He did not see any possible separation between economic and political struggle: the economic struggle needs political rights and the political struggle is economic at the same time.[21] But this very formulation hides the difficulty: the economic struggle if narrowly defined demands only a certain group of formal political rights and *not* a political struggle for the seizure of power. And political struggle, when narrowly defined, may have few economic consequences. Of course, given his optimistic view of the internal limits of capitalist development, and his justifiedly pessimistic view of German political possibilities, the argument works pretty well. But these very premises were open to attack. They were attacked theoretically by Bernstein, and their weakness was even more fundamentally exposed by the history of the German labor movement which involved the division of

19. For example, he derived consciousness from economic interest, and economic interest from economic laws.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 176-177 and pp. 185ff.
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 185-186.

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the "class struggle" into the economic activity of the unions and the political activity of the party. We will have occasion to refer again to the Erfurt synthesis, but we have already said enough to conveniently introduce Bernstein's attack on the revolutionary theory incorporated in the synthesis.

The Erfurt program attempted to link revolutionary theory and reformist practice by a theory of capitalist development. Within the context of his theory of development, in 1892 at least, Kautsky tended to see the struggle for reform as a means toward the preparation of the militant proletariat. (This position was best formulated by Rose Luxemburg in her reply to Bernstein). Bernstein had no disagreement with the practical part of the Erfurt program. But he wanted to turn this practical part ("the movement is everything, the end is nothing") from a mere means to an end in itself, eliminating the ultimate end of the movement altogether. To do this, however, he had to dispute primarily not about tactics, but about a theory of development that did not permit a completely smooth transition into socialism or even democracy. Of course, as we have argued, the theory almost permitted such transition. Bernstein's job was made far easier by the fundamentally linear nature of the Engels-Kautsky social theory.[22] Since in terms of overall development this theory had a minor role for the class struggle, Bernstein had little difficulty in completely dispensing with the class struggle, (which was an element of non-linearity). Since Kautsky and Engels reduced Marx's abstractions to mechanical components of a deterministic theory, they were indeed open to empirical falsification. Kautsky even helped Bernstein with his research. His pragmatic treatment of problems like expropriation, and his olive branches to the small capitalist, the petit bourgeois and the small peasant could easily be turned against a theory that also claimed a deterministic solution (i.e., general expropriation and proletarianization) for exactly the same reasons. But Bernstein was not satisfied to score only a few points. He wanted to completely free the reformist practice of the party from the whole of the theory that he believed was the Marxian theory of social development.

The Erfurt synthesis saw an objective development of capitalism toward disaster and collapse, and its revolutionary transformation into socialism at some later stage of this development by a proletariat prepared for this task by the same developmental process and by its own democratic, reformist struggle. Bernstein believed that no objective development of capitalism led toward collapse, and that a combination of capitalist development and

22. As far as Marx himself was concerned, Bernstein had to be content with a few pot-shots, using one misunderstood part of *Capital* against others, at times confronting a frozen category or two with contrary empirical evidence. His total lack of understanding for dialectical theory helped him in this endeavor. The same can be said of his American biographer, Peter Gay (*The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism*, New York: Columbia U. Press, 1952) who constantly uses neo-positivist criteria to falsify Marx's (non-existent) predictions. Both Bernstein and Gay are a better match for the Engels-Kautsky synthesis.

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political reform pointed toward socialism. To make his case, he had to combat the Engels-Kautsky theory of development. Here, his attack on the "labor theory of value" and the "materialist theory of history" are only of subsidiary interest. Far more important is his claim that the immanent development of capitalism is not at all toward the concentration of all property in the hands of a few. As we have argued, the transformation of property relations played a very large role in the Engels-Kautsky theory of the movement of monopolization and concentration toward the self-abolition of capitalism. Bernstein took this stress on property one step further but, on the contrary, proceeded to investigate who in fact owns the means of production under advancing capitalism. His aim was twofold: he hoped to combat the theory of impoverishment that culminated in a crude two class model of a revolution of the hungry majority, and even more important in our context, the theory of linear and increasing monopolization. He carefully ran through statistics of share holding and of the size of enterprizes to establish his case, and *on his own level* he succeeded in showing that there was statistically absolutely no polarization of economic holdings, no absolute impoverishment of the majority of the population, no proletarianization of the middle strata, no disappearance of small and medium enterprise etc.[23] The Kautsky-Engels model, its frozen categories, its deterministic schemes, its stress on property instead of the structure of labor, allowed this refutation. But Bernstein attacked the same objectives also from a somewhat more *theoretical* point of view. He tried to show that the Marxian crisis theory is true only in terms of its developmental tendencies (falling profit rate, disproportionality, overproduction), but that in their empirical manifestations these tendencies are counteracted by many factors. Of course (as Bernstein admits) Marx was the first to show this. But Bernstein believed that advanced capitalism found counteracting devices (vast sources of credit, control mechanism, cartel etc.) which would read empirical crises (not to speak of a collapse) out of existence. For Engels and Kautsky the crises create the monopolies. For Bernstein modern monopolies (though his argument works better for state regulated monopolies) tend to totally control crises.[24] Of course, Bernstein was not happy about this state of affairs. The persistence of the immanent tendency toward overproduction (even in the absence of actual crisis) is still equivalent to artificial scarcity, i.e., instead of periodic destruction of means of production, their controlled underutilization.[25] But the system, in spite of its injustice, is stable. It does not tend toward its own destruction.

Nor does it produce its own revolutionary gravediggers. Bernstein also

23. The above passage is a summary of Parts III b and c of Eduard Bernstein, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*, new ed. of 1920 (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1969).
24. Bernstein, *Voraussetzungen, op.cit.*, pp. 107-108.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

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attempted to destroy the notion of impoverished but homogeneous proletariat of the Erfurt program, and even to discredit class analysis altogether (by restricting it to a merely descriptive function). First Bernstein argued, and this is mere repetition of the above, the proletariat is not growing in size relative to all other classes of society. The industrial working class is and will remain everywhere a minority of the population. Second, the increase of the rate of exploitation is not an argument against the growth of real wages. Marx himself was ambiguous on this point, but the theoretical framework of *Capital* (unlike the *Communist Manifesto*) does not prohibit a gradual rise of real wages (of course well within the expansion of productivity).[26] Thus, Bernstein could use Marx to battle the Erfurt doctrine of pauperization. Furthermore he could also point to a statistical stability (or rise) of real wages. But the proletariat is not only not pauperized, it does not even exist in any rigorous sense, according to Bernstein. This claim flowed from his definition of class analysis. When not operating within the terminological framework of Marxism, he tended to define class by life-style, by empirical wants and aspirations, by immediate (and immediately perceived) interest. Using this criteria, Bernstein found that the modern working class is more heterogeneous and stratified than "the people of 1789,"[27] and that most workers have no particular desire for a socialist system of production.[28]

Once again, Engels' and Kautsky's inability to integrate the class struggle into their theory of development, to develop a class analysis closely related to the structural framework of the critique of political economy, permitted Bernstein to use empiricistic methods of refutation. His ability to dissolve the category of class into fragmented strata was in turn the basis for dissolving these strata into atomized men. In terms of capitalist development sociological strata as skilled workers, civil service employees, etc. have only descriptive importance. But atomized men, "citizens" (Bernstein proposed to use the noun *Bürger* for both bourgeois and proletarian alike) do become dynamically important if we are willing to depict the fundamental tendency of civil society as one toward general political democratization. This is precisely what Bernstein does. Having dissolved classes, he had no use for the notion of class state. Of course, he knew that imperial Germany was a class state resting on the compromise of the reactionary landowning class and the rising industrial bourgeoisie. But if this is only an empirical state of affairs, whereas democratization is the great tendency of the modern era, the political struggle for democratic re-

26. Cf. Joan Robinson, *Essay on Marxist Economics*, second edition (London: Macmillan, 1966), pp. 30-33. The three criteria worked out by Robinson were anticipated in a less rigorous fashion by Rosa Luxemburg.

27. Bernstein, *Voraussetzungen*, *op.cit.*, pp. 118ff. Since Bernstein insists on interpreting relationship to means of production in terms of ownership of property, it is not surprising that his society divides into an unstructured mixture of rich, poor, and those in between.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 121-122.

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form had history on its side. Only this struggle could realize social reforms. The tendency toward formal democracy does not in itself transform a society divided into rich and poor. But within the democratic institutions, the majority of the population can gradually fight for socialization. This would meet the economic struggle of the labor unions half way. Bernstein applauded union struggles as struggles toward socialization, and considered this politicization dangerous. This notion, of course, coincided with the position of the trade unions.[29] Bernstein argued that Social Democracy must define itself as a "democratic socialist party of reform" (what it already was as implied by the tactical part of the Erfurt program).

Having traced Bernstein's attack on the theory of the Erfurt synthesis, we must turn to the famous Bernstein debate. The first round of this debate involved the counterattack of the 'radicals' attempting to fully restore the Erfurt synthesis. We will focus on Rosa Luxemburg both because of the great power of her defense of "Marxism", and because she was the only one among the Marxists of the Second International who came to recognize the inadequacy of the ground she defended.

Rosa Luxemburg's *Social Reform or Revolution?* was an attempt to restore the Erfurt synthesis in the face of Bernstein's attack.[30] Nevertheless, this work did not accept the particular form of the Engels-Kautsky theory of capitalist development, and ultimately it tended to burst the framework of the Social Democratic theory and praxis. Of all Second International theoreticians, only Luxemburg had a grasp, if a more instinctive than systematic one, of the dialectical structure of Marxist social theory. As a result, she was in the best position to demolish Bernstein's simplistic use of the categories and yet at the same time to incorporate at least some of Bernstein's correct observations about the changing face of advancing capitalism. She very incisively demonstrated that Bernstein confused the concept of capital with the persons of capitalists, capital as a category of production with capital as property right, that instead of dealing with the dynamic structural relationships of wage labor and capital, Bernstein limited himself to the purely descriptive relationship of rich and poor. [31] She argued forcefully that all of Bernstein's basic confusions can be summed up by the principle that he was able to look at capitalist society only from the viewpoint of the single capitalist and that the concept of collective capital remained closed to him. Having thus understood the shaky theoretical ground of Bernstein's statistically supported critique, she was not forced to disregard the latter's correct observation (contradicting the Engels-Kautsky theory) about the tendency of small and middle range enterprises. She brilliantly argued that the combined existence of small and

29. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, op. cit.*

30. Rosa Luxemburg, "Sozialreform oder Revolution," in *Gesammelte Werke, Vol. III.* ed. by Clara Zetkin, Adolf Warski and Paul Fröhlich (Berlin: 1925—Raubdruck reprint), p. 1, pp. 32ff and p. 62.

31. Luxemburg, "Sozialreform oder Revolution," *op.cit.*, pp. 43-44.

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medium enterprises is extremely important for the development of capitalism from the point of view of technical innovation. Departing from Engels, she admitted no linear tendency toward monopolization.[32] Nor did she admit Bernstein's linear tendency toward democratization. In this last context she was one of the very few Marxists to systematically and undogmatically consider the theoretical problems of the modern state.

If Bernstein tended to see the modern state (and the process of democratization) as largely independent of social-economic development, the orthodox Marxism of Social Democracy tended to reduce the state to a mere tool of class rule. It is true that Kautsky often excluded popular parliaments, for him the main arena of political class struggle, from such reductionist treatment.[33] But only Luxemburg was able to synthesize the two approaches creating a far more flexible theory of the modern capitalist state that was not compelled to falsify the facts of political history. Implicitly following some of Marx's earliest writings, she saw the modern state as having a double function. A century of democratic-liberal reform in most Western countries indeed resulted in political institutions that *formally* corresponded to general public interest. However, even within democratic institutional forms, the power of the economically ruling classes remained decisive. The class state is the *content* of the democratic state. Capitalism (i.e., free enterprise) not being a legally instituted (in the direct positive sense) system, no formal democracy can contradict the class character of the state. The increasing role of the state in economic life is thus formally a step toward socialism, but in its content this role is obviously a strengthening of the capitalist system. Social reform within the existing political order has the same double character. However, Luxemburg did not regard the democratic form as merely epiphenomenal within the system as a whole. She perceived a potential contradiction between the extension of democratic institutions and capitalist development. In particular, she pointed to protectionism, militarism, and navalism, which she regarded as economic necessities for advanced capitalism, both as tendencies restricting even formal democracy and as signs of its weakening. For capitalism, and the capitalist political parties, formal democracy is less important than the survival of the given social-economic system. As a result, argued Luxemburg, the growing strength of the SPD was itself an argument against the democratization of Prussia. Consequently (and given her understanding of capitalist development to which we must return) Rosa Luxemburg outlined powerful tendencies counteracting Bernstein's constant and linear tendency toward democratization. Whe had an easy time pointing to the vicissitudes of political democracy in most modern Western states. But more systematically, she argued that world politics dividing into

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 16ff.
33. Kautsky, *The Class Struggle*, *op. cit.*, pp. 186ff.
34. Luxemburg, "Sozialreform oder Revolution," *op. cit.*, pp. 26ff.

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imperialism and militarism on the one hand, and internal politics dominated by the growth of the labor movement, force the bourgeoisie to severely limit and at times abandon formal democracy.[35]

From the above argument (and here the contrast with her later works is important), Luxemburg deduced consequences corresponding to the Erfurt program. Social Democracy remains the only consistent defender of democracy, needing democracy (the political form of the future) for the political maturation of the proletariat. Hence, the politically reformist everyday struggle remains important. But this cannot be a substitute for revolution precisely because no political reform can challenge the class content of the state. She also rejected the notion that the everyday economic struggle of the unions challenges class rule. Realizing quite early that revisionist theory gained its strength not theoretically, but from the strength of the political trade unionist movement, both outside and inside the party,[36] she directed a large part of her attack on revisionism against the trade unions (which Bernstein stressed only slightly). The unions are merely defensive (i.e., they fight to realize the market value of labor power) and within the limits of the existing order they represent only the (often reactionary) immediate interests of the isolated workers. Thus, she argued that the union struggle must be subordinated to the political struggle of the Social Democratic Party whose principles unite all partial and limited struggles (economic and political) into a comprehensive struggle for socialism.[37]

This leads to a central theoretical problem that runs through the life work of Rosa Luxemburg. In all her works she totally reversed Bernstein's emphasis and insisted on the centrality of the socialist goal (or: the goal of the socialist conquest of power) to the Social Democratic movement. She never tired of emphasizing that only the goal of the socialist seizure of power transforms everyday political and economic struggles into parts of something more comprehensive and significant.[38] And she very significantly argued that: "The secret of Marx's theory of value, of his analysis of money, his theory of capital, his theory of the rate of profit and consequently of the whole existing economic system is—the transitory nature of capitalist economy, its collapse: thus—and this is only another aspect of the same phenomenon—the final goal, socialism. And precisely because, a priori, Marx looked at capitalism from the socialist's viewpoint, that is from the historical viewpoint, he was enabled to decipher the hieroglyphics of capitalist economy."[39] A passage like this could indeed powerfully distinguish between Marx and Bernstein who, taking the point of view of the

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.
36. Cf. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, op. cit.*
37. Luxemburg, "Sozialreform oder Revolution," *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20ff.
38. Luxemburg, "Speeches to the Stuttgart Congress," (1898) trans. by John Heckman, in D. Howard ed., *Rosa Luxemburg, Selected Political Writings*, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 38-39; pp. 41-43.
39. Luxemburg, "Sozialreform oder Revolution," *op. cit.*, p. 49.

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individual capitalist, lost all comprehension of historicity. Having lost this notion of historicity and final goal, Bernstein was left with a one-dimensional vulgar empiricist analysis.[40] However, on its own ground, and in the context of Luxemburg's work as a whole, this passage and countless others present formidable difficulties. The reader is forced to ask, what is the *a priori* regulative principle of all socialist theory and praxis: the historicity of the necessary collapse of capitalism, proletarian seizure of power or the socialist future? Are we dealing with a completely deterministic or completely voluntaristic theory? It is fair to argue that Rosa Luxemburg never clarified these theoretical problems. In some contexts she clearly argued that *without a notion of the necessary collapse of capitalism*, the concept of the expropriation of the expropriators, the concept of the socialization of production, the materialist theory of history, the labor theory of value, the theory of class struggle and class analysis, and the socialist movement (in this order) *all become impossible.*[41] On the other hand, Luxemburg was the first Marxist theoretician to strongly emphasize "the subjective factor", the revolutionary class in the class struggle, without whose active intervention socialism remains only a possibility. Already in 1899 in a debate on militia she stressed that "society's objective development merely gives *the preconditions* of a higher level of development", and that socialist transformation will never be realized "without our *conscious interference*, without the *political struggle* of the working class."[42]

From a theoretical retrospect it is not so difficult to argue that Luxemburg wanted to avoid the opposite dangers of deriving socialism either as a product of free subjective will (Bernstein) or of necessary objective development (the orthodox account, Kautsky, et al.). We could then try to show that she attempted to work out a dialectic of objective possibility and subjective praxis, that she attempted to base historicity in a historical *dualism* that alternately appears as capitalist present and socialist future, and as the struggle of bourgeoisie and proletariat in the context of the possibilities of objective socio-economic development. But we would be departing from Rosa Luxemburg's self-understanding, which was generally monistic and deterministic. The dualism that usually crops up in her work is not the self-conscious dualism of subject-object in an alienated world, but a rigid antinomic juxtaposition of idealism and materialism, utopia and necessity,[43] and she places Marxism on the side of materialism and determinism.

Futhermore, determinism was hardly only a philosophical window

40. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.
41. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-75.
42. Luxemburg, "Militia and Militarism," trans. by J. Heckman in *Selected Political Writings, op. cit.*, p. 144.
43. Luxemburg, "Sozialreform oder Revolution," *op.cit.*, p. 5; p. 41, but compare to pp. 49-50 where she compares Marx's historical "dualism" to Bernstein's ahistorical "monism."

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dressing of Luxemburg's theory. The debate with Bernstein already showed that determinism, and corresponding dogmatism often entered into her theory of capitalist crisis. Even here, however, she tried to insist on the merely heuristic meaning of the notion that socialist transformation will only depart from a "general and catastrophic crisis." But she insists that the fundamental idea behind this notion is that "as a result of its own inner contradictions, capitalism moves toward a point...when it will be simply impossible."[44] Thus, the very notion of the adaptability of capitalism must be totally discarded.

Luxemburg argues that in the past the basis and the forms of capitalist development were often reconstructed and renewed. She located the causes of past crises precisely in such violent transformations and renewals of capitalism. But she strongly believed that in her own period capitalism was nearing the end, and such reconstructions were no longer possible.[45] Foreshadowing her later *Accumulation of Capital*, she saw the potentialities of capitalist expansion in spatial terms, and she believed that "the space" available for further expansion was rapidly closing.[46] In this context, Bernstein's answer (although he hardly possessed the economic theory to support the claim) pointing to an important distinction between *extensive* and *intensive* development was far more creative.[47]

Unlike Bernstein, Luxemburg was not as much interested in empirical crises (which, following Marx, she understood as temporary means of capitalist renewal), as in demonstrating the ultimate impossibility of capitalism. But in *Social Reform or Revolution?* she could base this impossibility on two principles only: on chronic overproduction rooted in the spatial limit of capitalist expansion and on the impossibility of the artificial restriction of productivity.[48] Bernstein correctly disputed these assertions. Luxemburg could recognize of course that monopoly means underutilization, and underproduction (monopoly is thus equal to drawn out crises, stagnation), but she felt that the spatial limits of market expansion would ultimately destroy the cartel arrangements (through renewed competition for the remaining markets) on which such underutilization depended. Thus, already in 1899 her theory of capitalist development and collapse, markedly different from the Engels-Kautsky theory, tended to rest on the single criterion of the spatial impossibility of capitalist expansion. The argument assumed its historically characteristic form in her *Accumulation of Capital*. We should note, however, that before specifically discussing its theoretical and political status, the *Accumulation*

44. *Ibid.*, p. 2-3.
45. In her first edition of "Sozialreform oder Revolution," she even assigned periodic cyclical crises exclusively to the last period of capitalism. But under Bernstein's attack, she abandoned this position in the second edition. For both versions, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 10 and pp. 14-15.
47. Bernstein, *Voraussetzungen*, *op.cit.*, pp. 104-105.
48. Luxemburg, "Sozialreform oder Revolution," *op.cit.*, p. 15.

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of Capital cannot be understood without Luxemburg's analysis of the mass strike. (To maintain the continuity of our exposition, I will first deal with the historically later work, the *Accumulation of Capital.*)

As Rosa Luxemburg's major economic treatise, the *Accumulation of Capital* (1911), rests on the fundamental insight that Marx's *Capital* was left a fragment and that the dynamic of capitalism cannot be understood within the level of abstraction of the first volume. Under the aegis of the Hegelian-Marxian category of totality, Luxemburg realized that the dynamic of the capitalist system lies on the level of concretion that focuses on total and not individual capital, on expanded reproduction: on a level that unites the production and realization of surplus value.[49] The consequences of this procedure pointed toward a theory of imperialism and militarism as the final forms of advanced capitalism.[50] Luxemburg's basic argument, as presented in the *Accumulation of Capital* and the *Anti-Kritik*,[51] sees the Marxian schemata of expanded reproduction in the unfinished and fragmentary second volume of *Capital* as the starting point of her critique of Marx and of her own argument. Although Marx never said this and Tugan-Baranovski was the first to draw such a conclusion, according to Luxemburg, the schemata *seem* to imply that expanded reproduction, i.e. accumulation of capital, is a totally self-moving, self-balancing and unlimited process, in which the capitalists themselves (i.e. the aggregate capitalist composed of the capitalists who produce commodities—Department I, and the capitalists who produce means of production—Department II) represent the demand for higher volumes of commodities and means of production.[52] The Marxian reproduction schemata, furthermore, presuppose (for the sake of methodological simplification) a universal capitalist economic system composed of only workers and capitalists.[53] According to Rosa Luxemburg, the whole discussion of expanded reproduction based on the above premises leads to a series of insoluble contradictions of different levels of analysis. She recalls first of all Marx's statements throughout his theoretical corpus which refer to the

49. Cf. Georg Lukács, "Rosa Luxemburg as Marxist," in *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (Berlin: Der Malik Verlag, 1923) pp. 41ff. and Herbert Marcuse, "The Concept of Essence," in *Negations*, trans. by Jeremy Shapiro (Boston: Beacon, 1968) pp. 85-86.

50. It is quite astonishing that Luxemburg's best biographer, Nettel, should make the claim that the *Accumulation of Capital*, trans. by Agnes Schwarzchild (London: Routledge, 1951) has little to do with imperialism. Luxemburg was obviously seeking the basic tendencies of imperialism in the problems of accumulation, and she believed she found them. Cf. Peter Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg*, abridged edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 166.

51. Rosa Luxemburg, *Anti-Kritik: The Accumulation of Capital or What the Epigones Have Done to Marxian Theory*, published in two parts by the National Caucus of Labor Committees, Winter 1971, Summer 1972. It would be dangerous to follow Luxemburg's argument from this extremely clear and compact text as does Sweezy in the *Theory of Capitalist Development* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1942). The *Anti-Kritik* does not adequately present all sides of Luxemburg's argument.

52. Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital, op. cit.*, p. 330ff.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 331ff.; *Anti-Kritik*, p. 51.

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contradiction between the unlimited expansive capacity of the productive forces and the limited expansive capacity of the social consumption (elsewhere: markets) under conditions of capitalist distribution. This was stated most clearly by Marx when he argues that "conditions of direct exploitation and those of the realization of surplus value are by no means identical. They are separated logically as well as in time and space."[54] Rosa Luxemburg repeatedly argues, however, that according to Marx's schemata of expanded reproduction the production and realization of surplus value *are* logically identical, and hence *there can be no* limitation on the expansion of consumption.

Thus, the first contradiction of Marx's equations is with other (for Luxemburg, more fundamental) parts of Marx's work.[55] Their second contradiction, she argued, is even more serious: it is a self-contradiction. On closer examination, this self-contradiction turns out to be a violation of Rosa Luxemburg's own definition of capitalist accumulation. Marx's schemata of accumulation exclude the possibility of any new demand, to justify accumulation. Workers can consume only their wages (V), which is one of the given components of the total value of commodities (W = C+V+S):[56] constant capital (C) which is allocated according to the internal capitalist exchange, represents also a given demand. But where does the demand come from for the surplus (S) component of total value (W) if the increasing consumption of capitalists can consume only a small part of the surplus? Luxemburg rejects the alternative that capitalists could be the source of this new demand, arguing that this solution leads to the expansion of commodity production for its own sake, an absurdity to the capitalists to whom accumulation means the "amassing of money capital." She repeatedly defines *capitalist* accumulation in terms of increasing "money profit," in terms of transforming "an increasing amount of commodities into money capital."[57] In this context, she is not simply falling into the error of psychologizing the total capitalist.[58] To be sure, she concretizes the argument (especially in the *Anti-Kritik*) in a misleading direction when she asks where does the money for new accumulation come from?[59] In point of fact, the methodological meaning of the argument lies in an entirely

54. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital, Vol. III*, in *Werke, Vol. XXV, op. cit.*, p. 254.

55. Bernstein was the first to draw this conclusion when he defended the crisis theory of Volume II of *Das Kapital* against that of Volume III. Cf. *Voraussetzungen, op. cit.*, pp. 96ff.

56. Paul Sweezy and Joan Robinson sharply criticize Luxemburg for not realizing that an increase in real wages is *potentially* both a result and a stimulus of the process of accumulation. Cf. Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development, op. cit.*, p. 204; Joan Robinson, "Introduction to Rosa Luxemburg's *Accumulation of Capital*," *op. cit.*, p. 23.

57. Luxemburg, *Anti-Kritik I, op. cit.*, p. 51 and p. 57.

58. This is Lucien Goldmann's critique of her argumentation. Cf. "Fragen zur kritischen Theorie der Oekonomie," in *Dialektische Untersuchungen* (Neuwied: Luchterhand Verlag, 1966), p. 278.

59. Cf. Sweezy's critique, which shows that if the problem were the source of money, non-capitalist consumers could make little difference. *Theory of Capitalist Development, op.cit.*, p. 205.

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different direction, in an attempt to find the *differentia specifica* of capitalist accumulation. Let us recall Marx's argument against "Say's Law" (every supply produces its own demand) in volume I of *Capital* that shows the necessity of conversion to money terms as merely the other side of the logical, spatial and temporal separation under *conditions of commodity exchange* between production, selling and buying, supply and demand.[60] Capitalist accumulation occurs in the medium of commodity exchange. Even if we accept Marx's argument (apparently contradicting Luxemburg) that capitalism is the first fully dynamic economic system implying "production for the sake of production" and not just "production for the sake of immediate consumption,"[61] we would still have to add the following qualification: capitalism is production for the sake of production in the *form* of production for exchange, and not in the *form* of production for needs. Rosa Luxemburg is focusing precisely on this qualification, i.e. production for exchange, for two reasons. First, to show the difference between capitalist and socialist accumulation;[62] second, to concentrate on the factor that implies potential ruptures between production and consumption, supply and demand. But the abstract Marxian equations of expanded reproduction do not permit such ruptures. Luxemburg therefore attempts to show that if we translate these equations into money form (and under capitalism we must do so) violent breaks between the production and realization of surplus value become *possible*. But she immediately goes beyond her proof (especially in the *Anti-Kritik*) and argues that these breaks *necessarily* lead to the impossibility of capitalist accumulation in a society composed of only workers and capitalists.[63]

Fortunately, in Luxemburg's analysis, the internal contradictions of Marx's framework of expanded reproduction are cancelled out by their being contradicted by the empirical world. There is no purely capitalist society anywhere composed of only workers and capitalists, and "the capitalist mode of production is only a fragment of total world production."[64] Luxemburg of course knows that empiricist objections would not in themselves affect the framework of Marx's analysis. The critique of political economy is not a description of the empirical surface,

60. Cf. Marx, *Das Kapital I* in *Werke* vol. XXIII, *op.cit.*, p. 127, and especially *Das Kapital II* in *Werke* vol. XXIV, *op.cit.*, pp. 355-358, where Marx makes the necessity of conversion into money the fundamental difference between capitalist and socialist accumulation.

61. Cf. Marx, *Das Kapital I*, *op.cit.*, p. 618; *Theories of Surplus Value* Part II (Moscow: Progress Publishers; 1968), pp. 117-118; *Grundrisse*, *op.cit.*, p. 213. We should notice that Luxemburg herself never tried to penetrate the meaning of these Marxian passages on "production for the sake of production." She was convinced that production for the sake of production was an absurdity and an impossibility under capitalism.

62. On this, cf. Marx, *Das Kapital II*, *op.cit.*, p. 358.

63. Luxemburg's argument turns out to be fallacious if we recall Sweezy's and Robinson's argument about the expansion of real wages within the growth of productivity, and Robinson's argument on the internal inducements to invest because of technological improvements. Cf. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p. 28.

64. Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital*, *op.cit.*, p. 358; *Anti-Kritik*, *op.cit.*

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but an analysis of the fundamental tendencies of capitalism. However, Marx's analysis of expanded reproduction, because of its internal contradictions, cannot refer to capitalist accumulation. As a result, Luxemburg feels justified to search for a new analysis of the inner tendency of capitalist accumulation in a primarily non-capitalist world, in a world where capitalism is empirically expanding at the expense of non-capitalist modes of production.[65]

Luxemburg's own analysis hardly abandons the Marxian reproduction equations. But in her hands, the equations undergo an important functional change. Instead of describing the inner tendency of capitalist accumulation, they focus on the untenability of "pure capitalism," and especially on the non-self-sufficiency of the capitalist world within the totality of a non-capitalist world. The schemes imply, to Rosa Luxemburg, the need for non-capitalist consumers to guarantee the demand for new accumulation. In an age when the internal non-capitalist sector (peasantry, simple commodity producers) no longer serves this function, the schemes imply imperialism. However, even in the context of her original use of Marx's equations, Luxemburg introduces yet another important modification: the factor of the growth of productivity. From this perspective, even her arguments concerning the problem of money become more coherent. On the basis of Marx's arguments for the growing organic composition of capital (the ratio of constant capital to variable capital) she attempts to locate a tendency of Department II (commodity production) to overproduce relative to Department I (production of means of production). The argument is based on two implicit assumptions. First, improvements in the productivity of labor producing constant capital (producer's goods) cannot keep pace with the productivity of labor *using* constant capital to produce consumer's goods. Historically (though not logically), this was not an unfair assumption.[66] Secondly, capitalists in Department II cannot immediately reinvest their own surplus in Department I. The reason for this is that the material form of this surplus (i.e. commodities for consumption) would not permit its being used as a substitute for the relatively underproduced means of production.[67] Thus, from this point of view, trade with non-capitalist consumers is important for capitalism, not as a source of new money, but as a possibility to alter the material form of the surplus, according to the given

65. *Ibid.*

66. Robinson, *op.cit.*, p. 22.

67. Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital, op.cit.*, pp. 335-339. Lucien Goldmann considers this argument to be the valid center of her analysis. Cf. *Dialektische Untersuchungen, op.cit.*, pp. 267ff. Joan Robinson, however, demonstrates that the argument suffers from several difficulties. First, increases of productivity could cheapen the value of means of production to neutralize effects of productivity altogether. Secondly, investments are not *in fact* restricted to the sector from which the given savings flow. In spite of these counterarguments, however, Robinson admits that historically (though certainly not logically) Luxemburg's claims are plausible.

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needs of the two departments.[68]

The uses of economic imperialism are not limited to altering the form of the surplus. To the extent that Luxemburg poses the psychologistic question about the inducements to investment, she can add the availability of cheap and rare raw materials, and cheap labor power in non-capitalist territories. Even the casual student of the history of Marxism knows these arguments from Lenin's pamphlet on imperialism. But Luxemburg seriously differs from Lenin and Lenin's economics teacher, Hilferding, in not deducing the phenomena of imperialism from a new, monopoly stage of capitalism. (She was never too sympathetic, as we have seen, to the Engels-Kautsky stress on monopolization.) In Luxemburg's analysis, imperialism is a specific historical form of the most fundamental tendencies of capitalism. Futhermore, in her analysis, the question of the historicity of capitalism is intrinsically tied to the further development of imperialism. Once again, the argument is structured according to iron logical necessity. The invasion of the non-capitalist world with cheap commodities, the terroristic exploitation of the labor power of the colonies, the destruction of natural communities, play the role of primitive accumulation and pave the way to full integration in the capitalist world. For Rosa Luxemburg, primitive accumulation is by no means confined to the distant past of capitalism. It is the tendency of the whole world to become capitalist through an original accumulation process enforced by the existing capitalist countries. But the culmination of this tendency is the impossibility of capitalist accumulation. This is the hidden meaning of the Marxian expanded reproduction schemes: the contradiction of the schemata becomes the "living mirror of the world course of capital—its fortune and its end." Instead of the anatomy of capitalist accumulation, *the equations represent capitalism's tendency to collapse.*[69] In her critique of Bernstein, Rosa Luxemburg had forcefully argued that without the regulative idea of the necessary collapse of capitalism, no socialist theory is possible. In her *Accumulation of Capital*, she attempted to articulate a theory based on this regulative idea. Yet, she was still highly ambiguous on the exact meaning of collapse. The interpretation of the Marxian *schemata* point to one of the difficulties. In several contexts, Luxemburg interprets Marx's equations as pointing to "some sort of more advanced organization than capitalist production and accumulation." [70] She states that even though Marx's schemata cannot represent capitalist accumulation, they are an adequate description of accumulation under a planned, socialist economy,[71] where production of consumer goods would

68. Even Sweezy notices this possibility. He does not consider it relevant to Luxemburg's argument only because he traces her thesis almost exclusively from the *Anti-Kritik* (e.g., cf. part II, *op.cit.*, p. 33) where productivity is not even mentioned. Cf. *Theory of Capitalist Development, op.cit.*, p. 205.

69. Luxemburg, *Anti-Kritik, op.cit.*, part II, p. 51, p. 55.

70. Luxemburg, *Accumulation of Capital, op.cit.*, p. 351.

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 128-131.

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be an end in itself, where accumulation *or* production for its own sake would be identical to the increasing satisfaction of human needs. However, Luxemburg does not deduce the necessity of socialism from this coincidence of the schemes for the collapse of capitalism and for socialist accumulation. Only the collapse of capitalism is used consistently as the regulative principle of her analysis.[72]

In any case, Rosa Luxemburg presents us with a deterministic theory. Capitalist accumulation cannot proceed without increasingly making itself impossible. Of course, this stance raises the problem of the meaning of praxis. With only the slightest alteration of her deterministic account, Luxemburg argues that the survival of capitalism becomes historically precarious long before the system reaches its logical end. Already in 1899, Luxemburg pointed to militarism as a fundamental problem of advanced capitalism. She brought this fact to bear on Bernstein's superficial arguments on democratization. She also demonstrated the importance of militarization as a form of capitalist investment and as a stimulus to technical innovation under capitalism.[73] In the *Accumulation of Capital* and under the compulsion of a highly deterministic argument, with less sophistication than in 1899, she presented militarism as another safety valve for capitalist accumulation. In fact, something like a military-industrial complex was the only internal market expansion she could conceive. But the economic safety valve of militarism introduces a whole period of catastrophes when imperialism (the other safety valve) is limited by great power rivalry that diminishes possibilities of expansion in non-capitalist areas. It was in this context that Luxemburg expected the revolution of the international working class, the human victims of the whole history of capitalist development (and the *Accumulation of Capital*, unlike some of her other works, subscribes to some form of the pauperization thesis of the *Communist Manifesto*) to consciously intervene and to create a truly universal and more humane form of production. The end of capitalism may be *logically* necessary, but its *historical* end and the creation of socialism are thus related to *praxis*.[74]

Luxemburg was hardly disturbed by a deterministic interpretation of her theory: indeed, she insisted on it. She explicitly argued that if socialist

72. None of Luxemburg's critics paid any attention to her overall theoretical framework. This is even true of Roman Rosdolsky who demonstrates that Rosa Luxemburg did not fully understand the meaning of Marx's categories and method within the overall framework of the critique of political economy. Rosdolsky, however, misses the important fact that for Luxemburg the meanings of the categories change partly because she confronts (unsuccessfully) a wholly new stage of capitalist development. Even the best Marxology cannot be the replacement for a critical reconstruction of the whole framework of Marx's critique. Cf. Roman Rosdolsky, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Marxschen "Kapital"* (Frankfurt am Main: Europaische Verlaganstalt, 1968), pp. 86ff.

73. Luxemburg, "Militia and Militarism," *op.cit.*, pp. 141-142.

74. Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital, op.cit.*, p. 467; *Anti-Kritik, op.cit.*, pp. 55-57.

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analysis loses the regulative principle of capitalist collapse, as incorporated in her interpretation of Marx's equations of expanded reproduction (or if the equations are interpreted to mean in principle unlimited *possibilities* of capitalist accumulation), then capitalist crises, the class struggle and imperialism will all remain without theoretical foundation. The source of Luxemburg's insistence (noted by Joan Robinson) to structure historically plausible economic arguments according to tenuous logical necessities, is her belief that only a notion of necessary collapse can be the structuring, regulative principle of an analysis that seeks the historicity of capitalism and the dynamic of revolution. Thus, the *Accumulation of Capital* tends to deduce the class struggle most mechanically. However, this fact can be the basis of only a completely one-sided interpretation of Luxemburg's theory of revolution. We must turn to her theory of the subjective factor, to her theory of the mass strike, to understand the other side.

Up till now, I have generally followed not a historical but a logical exposition of Luxemburg's theoretical development. It was relatively easy to establish the notion of collapse as the transition between her two theories of capitalist development in *Social Reform or Revolution?* and the *Accumulation of Capital.* And yet we would have to misrepresent her personal development and the development of the radical wing of German Social Democracy if we argued for the smoothness of the transition between her imaginative defense of the Erfurt synthesis and her theory of imperialism. In between the two works Luxemburg came to reject the political implications of the Erfurt synthesis of revolutionary theory and reformist practice which in the end could hardly be distinguished from the political implications of revisionism.[75] In between the two works, and under the dual impact of successful mass actions in Russia and the *organizational* conservatism of party and unions in Germany, she composed a third: *Mass Strike, Party, and Trade Unions* (1906).

Historically, the problem of mass strike, the attack on organizational conservatism and the theory of imperialism are strongly related moments of the history of the radicals within Social Democracy. Luxemburg herself was one of the first to attack militarism and protectionism, two dimensions of imperial Germany's early imperialist posture, and she did this during the course of the Revisionism debates. However, in 1899, the issue of imperialism was related primarily to political and tactical revisionism. Kurt Eisner, a theoretical revisionist, became by 1900 one of the staunchest critics of militarism and imperialism. Kart Liebknecht, the other most consistent critic, was not a leading participant in the Bernstein debates. Significantly, Eisner and Liebknecht earned the enmity of the party executive sooner than any of the theoretical radicals. Futhermore, even before the 1907 electoral defeat, in which nationalistic arguments for

75. Indeed the politics of the executive, still under the aegis of the Erfurt program, were often to the right of Bernstein's.

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imperialism were deliberately used to discredit Social Democracy, Bebel and the executive were sensitive to the fact that apparent lack of patriotism did not help the party in its electoral policy.[76] The most serious collision of the "anti-imperialist" Social Democrats with the executive was, however, almost identical in time (1905-1906) with Rosa Luxemburg's attack on the executive and the Erfurt Program, now appearing in the form of a theory of trade union and party equality. Where Liebknecht stressed the new tactical requirements of an age increasingly dominated by imperialism and militarism, Luxemburg stressed the revolutionary possibilities of an age characterized by a new level of mass struggle. Of course, already against Bernstein, Luxemburg showed that militarism counteracts democratization. This implied some doubt about reliance on democratic methods even in the everyday work of the party. But her theory of the *mass strike* moved beyond mere doubt in the direction of an entirely different program for Social Democracy. The dogmatic resistance of the executive to any alteration in the tactic of the Erfurt Program brought Luxemburg against the theoretical dimension of the program itself, in terms of her specific theory of imperialism.[77] Of course, a theory of imperialism did not have to contradict the Erfurt Program. Hilferding (and Lenin), deriving imperialism from a new monopoly stage of capitalism, only updated the theoretical part of the original program. Futhermore, a theory of imperialism certainly did not have to challenge the growth of centralization and bureaucratization in the party. Again the examples of Hilferding and Lenin are clear in this regard. And we should even admit that Luxemburg's theory of imperialism in the *Accumulation of Capital* abstractly, i.e. on its own, was compatible with a rather passive political posture.[78] However, this last interpretation (made only by the Stalinists in the 1930s) and the analogies of Hilferding and Lenin must be discarded if we come to understand Luxemburg's theory of imperialism as complementary to her theory of mass struggle and to her attack on the organizational conservatism of the SPD—if we understand the *Accumulation of Capital* as the *theoretical part* of a new, radical synthesis outlining a new level of capitalist development (that makes formally democratic political strategy rather senseless), corresponding to a *practical part* arguing for a new level of socialist praxis. In Luxemburg's synthesis, furthermore, at least as far as her political writings and activity were concerned, the moment of praxis had clear primacy. Let us therefore turn to her theory of praxis, her theory of the subjective factor.

Rosa Luxemburg was the first theoretician of Social Democracy to systematically consider the importance of the subjective factor. In *Social Reform or Revolution?* she stressed the building of the subjective factor

76. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, op. cit.*, pp. 69ff., pp. 72ff.
77. Nettl, *Rosa Luxemburg, op. cit.*, p. 160.
78. *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168, where Nettl discusses the attacks on Luxemburg's supposedly mechanical theory of spontaneity.

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primarily in the sense of the Erfurt synthesis, i.e., parliamentary, reformist activity. In this area, defeats are the important dimensions of the education and preparation of the revolutionary subject, the proletariat. But even in this 1899 work, she went further than Kautsky in arguing that premature and unsuccessful attempts at the physical seizure of power (indeed, the first attempts must be premature, she says) will also be necessary for the self-creation of a class conscious and ultimately victorious proletariat. [79] However, in 1899, Rosa Luxemburg had no transitions to offer between these two types of "education" and "preparation." She believed she found these transitions in the history of the Russian mass strike movement culminating in the revolution of 1905. In her famous work of 1906, *Mass Strike, Party, and Trade Unions*, she presented a theory of revolution that stressed the rapid growth (in size, level of activity and consciousness) of the subjective factor, of the class conscious proletariat in a period of mass struggles, in a "period of revolution."

Rosa Luxemburg's theory of the subjective factor is not independent of her deterministic theory of capitalist development; the former presupposes at least an early version of the latter. She still tended to rigidly juxtapose voluntaristic subjectivism and deterministic objectivism, attacking (in fact quite justly) the anarchists, the German trade-unionists and party leadership for even discussing the question whether a general mass strike could be called or cancelled at will. Her own alternative, however, also leads to serious difficulties. She does not derive a revolutionary mass strike movement mechanically from the collapse of capitalism. This model would in any case have been totally inapplicable to the Russian situation. The necessary introduction of Russia into her analysis forced Luxemburg to push toward a theory of greater generality than merely a theory of capitalist development. She does not outline the relationship of objective development to class struggle but her implication is clear. She repeatedly emphasized that without the objective possibilities of social-economic development the mass strike is an anarchist dream. In Russia a system of tottering absolutism, on the verge of bourgeois transformation, offered the possibility of vast proletarian actions. But Luxemburg did not think that these actions could culminate in bypassing the bourgeois-capitalist stage of social history. In Germany, however, she believed that a fully developed capitalist system was nearing its collapse. Thus, in Germany the dictatorship of the proletariat was becoming objectively possible. [80]

We have still not adequately represented the complexity of Luxemburg's theory. She argued that the mass strike is "the phenomenal form of the proletarian struggle in revolution." The argument rests first of all on the assumption of the historical continuity of revolutionary development in time

79. Luxemburg, "Sozialreform oder Revolution", *op. cit.*, p. 32, pp. 63ff., and pp. 69ff.
80. Rosa Luxemburg, "Massenstreik, Partei und Gewerkschaften" in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Zetkin, Warski, Fröhlich (Berlin: 1925—Raubdruck reprint), pp. 75-76.

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and space. Russia, one of the least developed European countries, is in a line of revolutionary development that must retrace the history of the French Revolution and its aftermath, but its proletariat (both because of very advanced sectoral industrialization *and* the European circulation of struggles) is activized by the explosive movement toward democratic bourgeois revolution to develop *forms* that are continuous with the proletarian revolution objectively possible only in advanced countries.[81] What are these forms? Luxemburg's theory of revolution unfolds a complicated dialectic of essence and appearance, that is, she develops Marx's method in the first volume of *Capital* in the direction of a revolutionary theory. The mass strike, or rather its many fluid forms, are the modes of appearance of the period of proletarian revolution. The revolutionary process is the spontaneous, elemental power of the masses in motion, and this is externalized in terms of a series of mass strikes that move back and forth between political and economic actions, tending toward the unity of the political and the economic. These actions cannot be manipulated or predicted "from the outside": the most Social Democracy can do is to assume its political leadership by always representing the most advanced level of the struggle, by helping the circulation and mutual support of the various branches of the struggle.[82] But the role of the leadership (and here she seriously disagreed with Lenin) is relatively minor. Social Democracy continues to have a role in mass education, but even here the struggle tends to displace it. Aside from the unity of the political and economic levels, the most important form of manifestation of the mass strike is its "great cultural work" of rapid enlightenment and politicization of hitherto unorganized masses.[83] The latter is the most important contribution of the mass strike form to the development of *active* class consciousness,[84] which would have its consequences in spite of defeat of a given mass strike movement. The development of the subjective factor turns out to be identical to the development of the revolutionary process which, however, moves through defeats as well as victories.

Luxemburg's *Mass Strike* represented a powerful attack on the leadership of German Social Democracy, and especially of the trade unions. The experience of the Russian Revolution was for her and other radicals strong proof that any subordination of the party to trade unions can have only conservative consequences.[85] Where the Russian mass strike movement represented the unity of the political and the economic, the division of the German labor movement into party and unions represented the opposite. Luxemburg was willing to understand this division as a form of manifestation

81. Luxemburg, "Massenstreik", *op. cit.*, pp. 71ff.
82. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 64ff., 70ff.
84. *Ibid.*, pp. 65ff. Luxemburg believed that the class consciousness of even the most advanced workers in Germany, due to the long non-revolutionary period, was only latent.
85. Cf. Schorske, *German Social Democracy, op.cit.*, pp. 36ff.

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of a fundamentally non-revolutionary period when everyday economic and political (i.e. parliamentary) struggles must predominate. In the overall revolutionary perspective reformist everyday struggles relate to the final goal as parts to the whole. But only the Marxist Social Democratic Party could incorporate the political final goal of the movement and as a result the unions must relate to the party as a part to the whole.[86] According to Luxemburg, the arguments to the contrary (which already predominated at least in the party executive and union leadership) rest on the *illusion* created by a "normal" "peaceful" period of capitalism. However, she feared that the organizational framework, the bureaucracies created around these illusions, would seriously endanger the unification of the economic and the political, even in the revolutionary period when the objective possibility of mass strike existed. She was one of the first Marxists to seriously attack the bureaucratization, the specialization, and the anti-theoretical, anti-intellectual pragmatism of the party and trade union organizations.[87] Her early attacks on Lenin were also motivated both by her understanding of the conservative and authoritarian implications of bureaucratic centralism and her faith in the revolutionary development of the proletarian masses. She refused to locate the revolutionary discipline of the proletariat in the discipline enforced by the modern factory, by modern bureaucracy, and by the modern military.[88]

From *our* retrospect, in 1905 (not in 1918) Luxemburg was *right* in all the *fundamental* questions *against* Lenin. But her own theory of revolutionary subjectivity relied on an undemonstrated faith in the potentiality of the proletarian masses. To be more precise, she worked out two parallel theories of development, two theories of the destruction of capitalism. Her whole life she held the view that the objective collapse of capitalism is necessary. She thought she demonstrated this thesis in the *Accumulation of Capital.* But she also came to believe that the destruction of capitalism and the creation of socialism must be and will be the work of a revolutionary subject, the class conscious proletariat. She located the development of this subject in the historical continuity of revolution, and she did not succeed in truly meshing the forms of this continuity with the forms of appearance of capitalist development. Her analysis sought the historical dialectic of praxis but even in her important treatise on the class struggle, the *Mass Strike*, she did not resolve the rigid antinomy of freedom and necessity, subject and object, of class struggle and objective development. The final version of this antinomy appeared as two relatively independent concepts of development, the development of the collapse of capitalism (as formulated in the *Accumulation of Capital*) and the development of the revolutionary subject

86. Luxemburg, "Massenstreik," *op.cit.*, pp. 77ff.
87. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.
88. Luxemburg, "Organizational Question of Russian Social Democracy," in *Selected Political Writings, op.cit.*, pp. 291ff.

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(as formulated in the *Mass Strike*). She could in no way theoretically ground the collapse of capitalism on her romantic faith in mass action, but she realized (even if not self-consciously) that she could not ground socialism, a qualitatively new human world order, in an automatic collapse of capitalism (Kautsky) or in the subjectivity of the bureaucratic centralized, vanguard party (Lenin). Thus, the antinomy that her theoretical synthesis culminated in was not any more adequate to the hope of the revolutionary creation of a new world, than was her heroic political activity. Though she always opposed the Kantians within Social Democracy, her own analysis as a whole amounted to a Kantian antinomy of freedom and necessity, expressing the failure (or merely the difficulties?) of mediation beyond the torn world of civil society. [89]

3. *Dialectics and Philosophy in Engels*

Marxism, as a totally comprehensive world view, originates in the works of Friedrich Engels. The synthesis usually described as dialectical materialism that dominated the philosophical thinking of German Social Democracy and, even more, of Soviet Marxism was his accomplishment. The extent of Engels' influence has been often described, [90] and the objectivistic and scientistic dimension of this influence has been justifiably criticized by most neo-Marxists. Recently, the theoretical roots of Engels' positivism have been located in the theory of history that Marx and Engels developed, i.e., historical materialism. Of course anti-Marxist (or non-Marxist) historiography has often pointed to the deterministic nature of Marxist theory as a whole. However, this general (and often superficial) criticism was refuted by Lukács, who succeeded to reconstruct the Marxist theory including the critique of political economy around a series of concepts that represented a powerful critique of all objectivism and scientism. The discovery of philosophical anthropology (*Paris Manuscripts*) of the young Marx and the fusion of anthropological concepts with the concepts of political economy (*Grundrisse*) tended to confirm the historical accuracy of Lukács' interpretation. However, recently it was possible for Jürgen Habermas and

89. When this paper was written (summer 1972) I had no chance to consult the fine article by Norman Geras, "Rosa Luxemburg: Barbarism and the Collapse of Capitalism," in *New Left Review*, no. 82, November-December 1973. The author's stress on the "Junius Pamphlet" represents a useful corrective to my essay. However, Geras' interpretation as a whole vacillates between two points of view—an antinomic, or dualistic formulation of the work of Luxemburg which is completely right and a more heuristic view (that follows Lukács' essay "Class Consciousness") which is half right and is forced to explain away other texts. (Cf. pp. 32-33.) One should, on the other hand, stress antinomy in the absence of dialectical self-reflection. After all, Lukács' interpretation of capitalist development remains fundamentally linear and deterministic even if a real choice "socialism or barbarism" is the end result of this development.

90. Cf. George Lichtheim, *Marxism, op.cit.*, pp. 234ff, and Hans-Joseph Steinberg, *Sozialismus und deutsche Sozialdemokratie. Zur Ideologie der Partie vor dem I. Weltkrieg*, 2. Auflage (Hanover: Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschchen, 1969), pp. 43ff.

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Albrecht Wellmer to move a step beyond this interpretation, and locate one positivistic strand in texts such as the *German Ideology*: the implicit reduction of symbolic interaction to labor, that could be unfolded as a reductionist theory of historical materialism.[91] Whatever the ultimate merits of this argument,[92] the gradual dissolution of the concept of political alienation (a concept presented in "On the Jewish Question," "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the State," and even the *German Ideology*) in the concept of alienated labor was the first and the most significant sign of the emergence of a theory that would eventually assign politics, consciousness etc. to an immense superstructure the movement of which will passively (although with a lot of noise) follow the antagonistic development of forces and relations of production.[93]

The above criticism of Marx is validated primarily by the self-understanding (or self-misunderstanding) of the old Marx (cf. his various *published* prefaces to his late works) and certainly in terms of development of Engels' Marxism that takes off from this self-understanding. However, it is undeniable that Engels added some naturalistic elements of his own to the theory. His famous modification of economic determinism by a theory of reciprocal causes or influences,[94] demonstrates his mechanical cause-effect interpretation of the theory of base and superstructure. Even as he restates the famous passage from Marx's *18 Brumaire* that points to a wholly different (non-causal or even interactionist) interpretation of the base, i.e., as the framework of objective possibilities within which men make their own history,[95] Engels feels compelled to reduce human action to the ultimately passive effect of objective forces.[96] However, to be fair to Engels, unlike many of his Social Democratic (and especially Stalinist) followers, he restricted his totally deterministic interpretation to "pre-history," to the "realm of necessity," to human history before socialism, before the conscious

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91. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests, op. cit.*, pp. 28ff and all of chapter two; Albrecht Wellmer *Critical Theory of Society*, trans. by John Cumming (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971) pp. 70-71ff.

92. And Habermas and Wellmer must be criticized precisely for identifying too much of Marx's social theory with its positivistic dimension. Their reading (especially Wellmer's) of the *Grundrisse* and *Capital* is therefore unacceptable.

93. Vid. Karl Marx, "Preface" to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, trans. by S.W. Ryazanskaya (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), pp. 20-21.

94. Friedrich Engels, "Leters on Historical Materialism," in L.S. Feuer, ed., *Marx and Engels. Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy* (New York: Doubleday, 1959), pp. 395-396; p. 398; p. 411.

95. We must grant that many of the reductionist statements of Marx himself cannot be interpreted in terms of a dialectic of freedom and necessity. However, Althusser has demonstrated throughout his works that it is closer to Marx's intentions to read base-superstructure relationship as the function of a single totality, rather than a cause-effect relationship. Cf. Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. by Ben Brewster (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 111-114; and the Appendix on pp. 117ff. Aside from this important point, Althusser's Marx interpretation remains unacceptable.

96. Engels, "Letters on Historical Materialism," *op.cit.*, p 399; p. 411.

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making of history "according to a collective plan."[97] Nevertheless, this very argument makes the transition from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom utterly problematic, repeating the classical failure of the mechanical world picture to find a locus for freedom. Thus we should not be surprised that the rigidly deterministic and rationalistic Engels is forced in this context to speak of humanity's leap into the realm of freedom.[98] It was left to his follower Plekhanov to transform this "leap" into a special case of the deterministic dialectic of quantity and quality.[99]

A deterministic theory of history represents an indirect elimination of the last traces of the free subjectivity of thought and action, since in the universe pictured by mechanical physics history was to be (from Vico on) freedom's last refuge. The inclusion of the materialist interpretation of history in a metaphysical dialectics of nature completes the reduction. In Hegel, the dialectic obtains between freedom and necessity, and the ultimate unity of the two is the self-consciousness of the Absolute in a contemplative philosophy. Paradoxically, Hegel described this unity as the knowledge of necessity that is equal to freedom. Engels and his followers accepted this notion of freedom. Of course, for a philosophy that culminates in absolute contemplation the concepts of freedom as knowledge of necessity is indeed meaningful. To the extent that he defined freedom as *total* self-determination,[100] Spinoza could locate *human* freedom *only* in the total identity and even dissolution of the individual in the absolute substance—an identity that is meaningful only when the mind grasps the whole necessary structure of the world in an act of ultimate contemplation. However, this notion of freedom ought to be closed to a Marxist who seeks the freedom of *social* action and self-determination. For Spinoza, even the best social laws meant that there is something *outside* causally determining us (i.e., the objects of the emotions which must be restrained by the laws) and the part of his *Ethics* or social ethics is entitled "Of Human Bondage." The recognition of knowledge of an external causal order is never freedom for Spinoza, unless this recognition becomes the sole content, the sole meaning of our mental existence, and therefore no longer an external necessity. Of course, a historical theory of the human species (Spinoza did not recognize any mediation between the individual and nature)[101] could break through the closed circle of the Spinozian philosophy of substances. Therefore, it is doubly paradoxical that Engels implicitly and Plekhanov consciously turned history into deterministic "substance". Already from the point of view of

97. *Ibid.* This argument follows a central clue of Marx's *Warenfetischismus* chapter of *Das Kapital.*

98. Engels, *Anti-Dühring, op.cit.*, pp. 309-310.

99. Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, trans. by Julius Katzer (New York: International Publishers, 1969), pp. 45-46.

100. Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics* (New York: Hafner, 1949), Part I, Def. VI.

101. See Agnes Heller, "Spinoza Etikája" ["The Ethics of Spinoza"] in *Érték es Történelem* [*Value and History*] (Budapest: Magvetó, 1969), p. 170.

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Hegel's *Phenomenology*[102] (i.e., the project of comprehending substance as subject) the step to Spinoza represents a serious step backwards even if the Hegelian system itself in the end (but only in the end) returns to the contemplation of a historically unfolded substance. Engels prepared the way for this step backwards even though he had a strong inkling of the difference between Hegel's dialectic as method and as system. (He even argued that those Hegelians who tried to follow Hegel's method are almost without exception revolutionary, while those who accept the system are conservative.) For Engels the Hegelian method was the dissolution of everything stable and final into processes, and the Hegelian system was the movement from the self-alienation to the self-recognition of the Absolute, culminating in a dogmatic philosophy of Absolute Knowledge.[103] Given his criticism of the Hegelian system (and of its conservative implications) Engels' own notion of dialectics is totally paradoxical. Highly impressed by developments in the natural sciences (some of which pointed to the historical dimension in nature: Kant-Laplace theory of the cosmos, Darwinian evolution, etc.). Engels moved in two self-contradictory directions. On the one hand he banished philosophy from the study of history and nature, and swore by empirical special sciences. On the other hand, he "restricted" philosophy to the laws of thought: "logic" and "dialectics."[104] But this turns out to be no restriction at all since he already informed us earlier in the same text that dialectical philosophy is "nothing more than the reflection" of historical and natural processes in the brain.[105] Therefore, "dialectics reduces itself to the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought in two sets of laws that are identical in substance, but differ in their expression in so far as the human mind can apply them consciously, while in nature and also up to now for the most part in human history, these laws assert themselves unconsciously, in the form of external necessity..."[106] This revealing quotation yields three fundamental characteristics of Engels' Marxism: the triumph of speculative, metaphysical system-building, the triumph of nature over history, and the triumph of the object over the subject, or subjective praxis. The system triumphs because dialectics is defined as the general laws of motion of absolutely everything. Dialectics (as never in Marx himself) becomes a totally general *Weltanschauung*. The relationship of Engels'

102. From the point of view of the young Marx's critique of the "second nature" of alienation, (including political alienation) a Spinozian Marxism eternally confines mankind to the ground of *burgerlische Gesellschaft* (to which Spinoza's social ethics *or* political philosophy already pointed) implying a rigid dualism between citizen (man *qua* rational and communal) and subject (egotistical and irrational man). For Marx's most important critique of political alienation, cf. a text known to the Marxists of Social Democracy, "Zur Judenfrage," Part I, in *Werke*, Vol. I, *op.cit.*, pp. 347ff.

103. Friedrich Engels, "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy," in Feuer, ed., *Marx and Engels, op.cit.*, pp. 201-203.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 241.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

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system to Hegel and Spinoza is full of important clues. The specific laws of motion of the world (transformation of qualtity into quality, negation of the negation, etc.) are drawn from the first part of Hegel's *Logic*, the "Logic of Being." As Alfred Schmidt shows, Hegel could afford to outline an "ontological logic" and "pre-subjective" dialectic there because he would eventually *mediate* the one-sidedness by moving through the "Logic of Essence" and the "Logic of the Concept" which imply the transition of substance to subject, of nature to spirit.[107] Without this mediation, the Hegelian laws imply only a deterministic philosophy of substance, a return to Spinoza. And Engels' very terminology is strikingly Spinozian. He speaks of two sets of laws (i.e., of the external world and of human thought) that are "identical in substance." Spinoza clearly deduced all the implications of a philosophy of substance, and from the Marxian viewpoint one of these consequences is the impossibility of a social praxis going beyond civil (*bürgerliche*) society. Engels never seemed to understand this implication and this danger. Instead of using the concept of history to break out from the circle of Spinozian substance or Nature, Engels identified nature and history in terms of a common set of laws unified in a single concept of "the external world." From our point of view it makes little difference that in the case of history he leaves open the possibility of consciously applying the laws, since in a philosophy of substance the externality of the laws is itself the source of unfreedom.[108] For Spinoza, as long as there remain laws outside us that we must apply we are split into reason and emotion, and (to use the terminology of the political philosophy of civil society) citizen and subject. The alienation of the self that characterizes "civil society" is, in this framework, eternalized. The triumph of nature or substance in Engels' scheme (that corresponds to the drive toward the physicalist unity of the sciences in the late 19th century scientism), the inability to distinguish between the "dialectic" of nature and that of history, has some clear political implications. The same is true of the implications of the triumph of the object in his system. The "copy theory" or the "naive realism" of the two sets of laws reflecting one another, has strongly and rigidly dualistic consequences, and perhaps this is what Engels, the materialist, tried to avoid by calling on Spinoza's substance. But again, he forgets to follow all the implications. In Spinoza's highly consistent theory thought can completely mirror the structure of the world *because* there is no interaction whatsoever between thought (as far as *adequate*, true ideas are concerned) and the world. Engels can locate all the interactions he wants in objective nature itself (thereby modifying the mechanical philosophies of 18th century materialism) but he

107. Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in Marx*, trans. by Ben Fowkes (London: New Left Books, 1971), p. 59.

108. Within the social world, no conscious application can change the fact that the laws are external. For Spinoza internalization is gained only at the cost of the dissolution of the individual in the universal substance. There can be no Marxist alternative to this unless the Hegelian movement from substance to subject is introduced.

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can show only a technological form of interaction (not a dialectic) between theory and practice, subject and object. If we add to this framework Engels' materialist premise of the absolute causal priority of the world of matter, the consistency of the theory may be violated (and the "truth" of all theory may be placed in doubt) but neither alternative, neither the philosophy of substance nor mechanical materialism, changes the contemplative and passive notion of subjectivity that emerges.

Engels' philosophy pointed to several different philosophical alternatives within Social Democracy. But characteristically, none of these alternatives seriously modified the deterministic social theory that is the implication of Engels' system (though not of his concrete historical investigations). We will consider the various philosophical alternatives to demonstrate the results of our analysis of Rosa Luxemburg (i.e., that in the absence of a theory of dialectics which is also a philosophy of praxis, a dialectical theory of society cannot be consistently worked out, and that a philosophy of *praxis* in fact did not exist in the Second International).

4. *Materialist Determinism in Plekhanov and Kautsky*

Engels' materialist world-view affected all Social Democratic tendencies, but it was generalized into an orthodoxy only by the theoreticians of the "Marxist center," Plekhanov and Kautsky. In the works of both we find the emergence of a highly deterministic and reductionist understanding of the philosophical foundations of social theory, and this fact unites them in spite of some differences. Kautsky reinterpreted Marx through Darwin, Plekhanov through Spinoza,[109] and this was to imply some divergence in their specific understanding of the material base to which everything is reduced, and even more important, in their notions of causality and teleology. The contrast is between technological determinism and biological determinism. However, far more than this contrast is their parallel destruction or reduction of the Marxian concept of social relations. No matter how reductionist we judge Marx and Engels, the fact remains that their notion of the base (i.e. "the anatomy of Hegel's civil society") to which other dimensions are reduced, is itself the (antagonistic) unity of two sets of relations: man to man (social relations of production) and man to nature (forces of production). In most of their works it is clear that neither element can be neglected or reduced to the other. As long as this relationship is maintained it remains possible in principle to develop a dialectical relationship between consciousness and reality, between politics and economics, since theoretical and everyday consciousness, and political structures and actions, can all be potentially factors in maintaining or transforming the given relations of man to man. As Lucio Colletti has convincingly shown,[110] however, in Plekhanov's work the

109. Engels used both Darwin and Spinoza, in different contexts. Kautsky, however, was a Darwinian before he came to Marx in the first place. Cf. Steinberg, *Sozialismus, op. cit.*, p. 48.

110. Lucio Colletti, "The Marxism of the Second International", in *Telos*, no. 8, Summer 1971, p. 87.

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economic base is identified with "a purely material sphere which does not contain interhuman relations." Production in this scheme is productive technique, or technology, and to this everything else is reduced. Plekhanov creates a whole hierarchy of causation linking technology ("forces of production") and ideology by three intermediate causal levels: (1) economic relations conditioned by technology; (2) social-political regime built upon a given economic base; (3) psychology of social men determined by the preceding two stages, that in turn is reflected by ideologies.[111] The hierarchy accomplishes two tasks: it ultimately reduces everything to technology, and it rigidly distinguishes between the social and the economic dimension. In Kautsky the separation of the social and the economic is perhaps less complete since they are both (but separately) reduced to a third, i.e., the biological foundation of human existence. The social dimension is reduced to a supposed social instinct or drive, that emerges during the struggle for survival.[112] Human technology, on the other hand, is simply another factor that is traced to this struggle, as an aspect of the increasingly better adaptation to nature of the human species. While Kautsky indeed states that "technical progress forms...the foundation of the entire development of man,"[113] he refuses to commit himself on the absolute priority of either technology or what he calls economic life. In some contexts, he even explicitly refuses to replace economic determinism by technological determinism.[114] But his distinction between technology and economics does not imply that social relations are contained in Kautsky's concept of the economic. As already indicated, Kautsky (occasionally) injected a generous dose of technological determinism and derived human society from a different biological instinct than either economy or technology. Thus, he argues that in human society development (which is *faster* than the evolutionary development of animal species) is *rooted* in technological development: "every society is modelled by the technical apparatus at its command."[115] Thus in Kautsky's case we do not have a neat hierachy of reduction as in Plekhanov, and furthermore he discerns reciprocal influences on every level.[116] For example, he realizes that human technology cannot be completely independent of forms of consciousness, since the inheritance of new skills depends on the latter (e.g., on language). But, once again, human consciousness is reduced to yet another aspect of the evolutionary struggle of

111. Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems*, *op. cit.*, p. 80. It is interesting to note Engels rejected the separation of the social and the economic. cf. a letter to Kautsky quoted by Colletti, *op. cit.*.

112. Karl Kautsky, *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History*, trans. by John B. Askew, Third and revised ed. (Chicago: Charles Kerr, 1909) pp. 89ff.

113. *Ibid.*, pp. 122-123.

114. *Ibid.*, p. 165.

115. *Ibid.*, p. 133.

116. This much even Plekhanov is forced to concede because of Engels' famous letters to Bloch, Starkenburg etc. Yet, Plekhanov certainly had no doubts about the *ultimate* priority of the technological level.

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the species. Instead of a hierarchy we have in the end reduction of all aspects of human existence to the biological level. For Plekhanov the material base ultimately implies technology, for Kautsky biology. This distinction does not affect the separation of social and economic categories in the least. The most significant difference between Kautsky and Plekhanov lies in an entirely different theoretical area. In their respective characterization of historical necessity, biological and technological determinism do have somewhat different consequences.

The difference between Kautsky's and Plekhanov's solutions to the general philosophical problem of freedom and necessity is not immediately evident. Both seem to be champions of extreme determinism. However, if we return to the roots of their thoughts, a significant difference emerges relating to their attitude to teleology. The teleological dimension of Marx's conception of praxis ("Theses on Feuerbach") and of labor (*Capital*) is well known. The contrast between the worst architect and the most advanced bee points to human goals inverting the natural order of causality.[117] Plekhanov does not even consider it necessary to dispute this argument. Returning to Spinoza,[118] he is ready to admit that human consciousness *seems to* pose goals on which it acts. However, all final goals are illusory within the order of nature as a whole (just as the secondary qualities of sense experience). Plekhanov, in fact, prefers to refer to "savages" (and children) to show that "the goals" that they pose and the freedom that they feel can be explained from the point of view of modern sociology and biology as necessarily caused by their physiology, geographical situation and technological level. Real freedom lies, in fact, not in the positing of goals but in the recognition of (and adaptation to) a natural, causal order.[119] We won't repeat our objections to this notion of freedom understood as necessity. It is clear, however, that Plekhanov's concept of socialism, derived entirely as the result of a highly deterministic general sociology, turned the Marxian notion of praxis into social technology or social engineering, and it excluded the moral dimension of the theory altogether.[120] As a result, Plekhanov's Marxism was especially open to the objections of the Neo-Kantian Marxists, i.e., why should anyone fight for a socialism which, although necessary, is presented as morally neutral. Such a Marxism did not and could not incorporate a moment of "Sittlichkeit" or "ethical life," and was the most open to the attacks of a Marxism that attempted to recover a moral dimension. In this context, Kautsky's Marxism was somewhat less vulnerable. He originally came to socialism through a somewhat teleological interpretation of Darwin's theory of evolution. His Darwinism incorporated a generous dose of the enlightenment belief in progress. The process implied by the struggle for

117. Cf. Colletti, "The Marxism of the Second International," *op.cit.*, p. 85.
118. Spinoza *Ethics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 72ff.
119. Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems, op. cit.*, pp. 94ff.
120. Goldmann, *Dialektische Untersuchungen, op. cit.*, p. 215.

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existence had, for Kautsky, a natural teleology toward the formation of higher and higher modes of animal existence. "Species Solidarity," the "social instinct," etc., were the immanent products of animal evolution. The young Kautsky, hardly acquainted with Marx, based only utopian speculation on this natural *telos*. But even in his own later analyses, his study of Marx modified his Darwinism *only* in two ways. First of all, he realized that the human struggle for existence is not among individuals but groups and, secondly, he came to believe that in society the artificial organs of man (i.e. technology) qualitatively transform development.[121] The outcome of his Marxist modification of Darwin can be easily summed up: the natural *telos* of solidarity remains but the notion of linear development toward it must be abandoned. Human development implies categories like property, war, and competition, each of which represents *relative* steps away from even animal solidarity. However, in the *end* the animal *goal* survives. Christianity, and capitalism both represent steps toward the increasing universality, i.e., internationalization of the species, though they also incorporate contradictory moments (e.g. religious hatred, economic competition etc.) away from the goal. Within the world of capitalism the goal of the human species is located in the struggle of the class conscious internationalist proletariat.[122] Thus far, Kautsky's Darwinian-Marxism enabled him to distinguish between the necessary laws of historical development and the ultimate (biological) goal of this development. However, in the end his biological determinism did not permit him to ground this goal in anything other than extreme necessity. He explicitly denied the freedom of the will, and reduced human will to a biological instinct: the will to live.[123] The human correlate, or human agent of the final goal is sociologically located as the proletariat. In Kautsky, however, this agent is not characterized by free self-determination and self-transformation, but by actions mechanically motivated by *instinct* and *self-interest*.[124] The goals of this class are indeed presented (and *must* be presented) as *moral ideals* but, as all previous moral ideals, they would be *only* weapons of class warfare except for the fact that historical materialism scientifically demonstrates the absolute economic necessity of the actual realization of this ideal in a classless society.[125]

If, in the end, necessity triumphs in Kautsky's ethics, we should also note that he made some concessions to a moral philosophy. First of all, even though he historicizes the content of the various forms of morality (making them a function of social needs and class rule) he refuses to give up the absolute validity of at least one dimension of all morality, i.e., the so-called social instinct implying universality and solidarity. Secondly, he is forced to

121. Steinberg, *Sozialismus, op. cit.*, pp. 49-50; Kautsky, *Ethics, op. cit.*, pp. 120ff.
122. Kautsky, *Ethics, op. cit.*, pp. 158-160.
123. *Ibid.*, pp. 203-206.
124. Kautsky, *The Road to Power*, in A. Fried, R. Sanders, eds., *Socialist Thought* (New York: Doubleday, 1964), pp. 441-43.
125. *Ibid.*, pp. 436-437.

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admit that Social Democracy, as a practical political movement, needs moral ideals and that Marx's own works incorporate moral ideals. However, Kautsky insisted on a rigid separation between science and morality, fact and value in Marx and in general, and as a result his conclusions have a somewhat dualistic flavor.[126] Both the concession to moral philosophy and the dualism reveal the impact of a Kantian challenge within Social Democracy.

5. *Marxism and Ethics: Kant and Marx*

The neo-Kantian critique of naturalistic "dialectical materialism" had two obvious starting points: the first two of Kant's critiques. Indeed, the orthodoxy of Plekhanov and Kautsky suffered from both the absence of an adequate moral dimension and the presence of highly dogmatic epistemological (or rather metaphysical) foundations. Vorländer, Woltmann, Tugan-Baranowsky and others attacked materialist determinism primarily from the viewpoint of a socialist theory erected on moral foundations. Bernstein belonged to this group of thinkers, with some reservations on both sides. On the other hand, the group called Austro-Marxists (Max Adler, Otto Bauer and to a lesser extent Rudolf Hilferding) wanted to re-constitute the whole content of historical materialism (which, unlike the first group, they in no way challenged) on the foundations of a critical epistemology. However, they also could not derive socialist politics (as opposed to socialist science) from the foundation of a theory of society constituted under the category of causality, and in the end had to make some concessions to Kantian ethics. Nevertheless, they remained more orthodox in their theory and their politics than the group led by Vorländer and Woltmann who tended toward revisionist theory and practice.

In this cultural context, the notion of an ethical foundation for socialism first appeared in the works of F. A. Lange and Hermann Cohen. The latter is more important because several Social Democrats were his followers. The founder of the famous Marburg school, Cohen believed that Kant's categorical imperative, the maxim never to treat another as a means or as a thing, represented a demand for the creation of socialist community. Cohen also believed that a socialism morally founded could have nothing to do with any kind of materialism, and therefore Marxism. His followers, Staudinger, Vorländer and Woltmann, however, would never go this far. They realized that even the best ideal of Socialism would remain a mere dream if it did not confront the economic and political given.[127] On the other hand, they insisted that the socialist ideal can never be realized as a result of objective historical necessity. Ludwig Woltmann, relying on Bernstein, argued in 1900 in his book *Der Historische Materialismus* that

126. Goldmann, *Dialektische Untersuchungen, op. cit.*, pp. 219-220.
127. Steinberg, *Sozialismus, op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

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the historical collapse of capitalism was highly unlikely since the economic prerequisites required by Marxian theory were absent, and perhaps increasingly absent. Thus, Woltmann continued, the possibility of socialism can depend only on the moral will of the masses and on the socialist movement responding to the injustices of capitalism.[128] In a similar vein, Tugan-Baranowsky, who worked out far more systematic reasons than Bernstein for the impossibility of the purely economic collapse of capitalism, insisted in 1905 in his *Theoretical Foundations of Marxism* that the real contradiction of capitalism is moral and not economic. Socialism, therefore, can only be the result of the conscious moral activity of men.[129] It is well known that Bernstein had drawn similar conclusions, although the neo-Kantians could justly point out that, not understanding Kantian ethics, his moral ideal was purely utilitarian.[130] From an orthodox Kantian viewpoint, Woltmann's argument against a deterministic theory of socialism was the most penetrating. He insisted that even if capitalism collapsed as the necessary result of either the class struggle or economic crisis, the creation of a socialist society would not necessarily follow. Objective nature-like development can perhaps lead to a *Formwechsel der Knechtschaft* but never to the *Abschaffung der Klassenherschaft.* Only the free moral action of the proletariat consciously representing humanity can create the higher community demanded by Kantian ethics. And since the proletariat is not yet ready for this freedom, the task of the socialist movement must be primarily that of moral education and enlightenment. Economic development and its possibilities cannot be disregarded according to Woltmann, but only a parallel moral development of men can turn economic raw material into genuine human progress.[131]

As Vorländer points out, Woltmann's argument becomes the most consistent formulation for a reformist political program.[132] Unlike Bernstein, most reformist neo-Kantians managed to clarify their relationship to Marxist theory as a whole. Where Bernstein tended to implicitly substitute his own evolutionary determinism for a revolutionary one, Vorländer, Staudinger and Woltmann came up with a consistent formulation of the problem of causality and freedom. Indeed, they argued that reality can be looked upon from the viewpoint of causality, but causal analysis will not yield socialism. Fortunately for Marx, he did not completely rely on causal analysis, and Vorländer, e.g. finds a great deal of moral language and exhortation in the young Marx, but also in *Capital.*[133]

128. Ludwig Woltmann, *Der historische Materialismus* (1900), in Iring Fetscher, ed., *Der Marxismus. Seine Geschichte in Dokumenten* (Munich: Piper, 1967), pp. 255-257.

129. Michael Tugan-Baranowsky, *Theoretische Grundlagen des Marxismus* (1905), in Fetscher, ed., *Der Marxismus, op.cit.,* pp. 253-254.

130. Karl Vorländer, *Kant und Marx. Ein Beigrag zur Philosophie des Sozialismus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1911), p. 189.

131. Woltmann, *Der historische Materialismus, op.cit.,* p. 257.

132. Vorländer, *Kant und Marx, op.cit.,* p. 178.

133. Cf. Vorländer's original 1905 lecture, "Kant und Marx," cited by Goldmann,

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However, there was obviously trouble with Marx's self-understanding, i.e. he constantly argued against moral interpretations or his work. Therefore, Vorländer, Staudinger,[134] and many other neo-Kantians (though by no means all of them within Social Democracy) consciously undertook not to revise Marx here and there (à la Bernstein) but to revise the theory as whole, by reconstructing it around the categorical imperative in order to save Marx from his own self-understanding. They succeeded so well as to force the great Karl Kautsky himself (whose political actions were of course hardly different from theirs) to incorporate a moral dimension of sorts into his somewhat dualistic framework.[135] Given the theoretical context of Social Democracy, the revisionist neo-Kantians could be successfully (or at least *more* successfully) challenged only by those orthodox Marxists who were themselves followers of Kant: the Austro-Marxists. Max Adler, who was without question one of the most sophisticated exponents of this group before the Russian Revolution, will be primarily dealt with below.

Max Adler did not believe that Marx had to be corrected by Kant because he maintained that the "sociology" of Marx represented the culmination of the German Classical Philosophy that Kant himself founded.[136] In 1904, he argued that the Marxian critique of political economy is a *critique* in Kant's sense of the term. It contains the Kantian *Erkenntniskritik* and does not have to be supplemented by the latter. The basic concepts of Marx's critique (value, commodity, abstract labor, etc.) are *Denkmittel* through which the infinite complexity of events can be grasped in their lawfulness. The vast realm of phenomena cannot be approached by any combination of induction and deduction: what is needed is the precise analysis of the *a priori* isolated economic "cell forms" of *bürgerliche Gesellschaft*. Of course, Adler could not disregard the history of the concept of category from Kant to Marx. He interpreted this history as that of the concept of the *social a priori*. Adler tended to emphasize the subjective side of Kant's "transcendental deduction," stressing the presence of the categories in a transhistorical contemplative consciousness as such. According to Adler, Fichte introduced praxis into this consciousness and Hegel introduced historicity. But only in Marx did consciousness in general or consciousness as such, become fully social and historical, pointing

Dialektische Untersuchungen, op.cit., pp. 216-217.

134. Franz Staudinger, "Antonio Labriola und die Ethik," in Fetscher, ed., *Der Marxismus, op.cit.*, p. 249.

135. Cf. his famous work, *Kausalität und Teleologie im Streit um die Wissenschaft* (Vienna: Marx-Studien I, 1904), pp. 361ff; and "Das Verhältnis von Marx zur Erkenntniskritik" (1904), in Fetscher, ed., *Der Marxismus, op.cit.*, pp. 212ff. (Also, cf. Lichtheim, *Marxism, op.cit.*, pp. 305-306, and Vorländer, *Kant und Marx, op.cit.*, pp. 254ff, for other details of Adler's early works.)

136. For a reconstruction of this argument, vid. Goldmann, *Dialektische Untersuchungen, op.cit.*, p. 224. Adler's inability *or* unwillingness to see anything more than historical difference of content (and not function) between the Kantian and Marxian meanings of category is in itself a step toward interpreting critique as sociology.

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through its newly won categories to the social laws of a given period of history. It is in this context that Adler calls Marx the culmination of German Classical Philosophy. However, almost in the same breath, he also identifies Marxism as a deterministic science of society: sociology. Thus, the difficulties of a scientific Marxism reappear, at the worst possible moment thus ruining an analysis of some promise. Adler simply could not make up his mind whether Marx is the Kant or the Newton of the social world. A transcendental-empirical ambiguity that is possible to locate in the historically oriented part of the neo-Kantian tradition reappears in his work.

Subsequently, in his polemics with Plekhanov and Kautsky on the one side, and Vorländer on the other, Adler insisted that Marxism was a strictly deterministic science of society and that Marx (rather than Comte) was the founder of this science, i.e., sociology. In this context, he changed his conception of the relationship of Marx to the "critique of knowledge." Marx's sociology now becomes a continuation of the scientific revolution of the 17th century, its extension into the social world: Marx becomes the Newton of social phenomena. Given this devaluation of Marx, the Kantian notion of critique itself receives a less ambitious presentation. The critique of knowledge becomes a methodological aid to Marxism forcing the clarification of the concepts and the investigation of the meaning and the limits of the "instruments" of sociology. The critique of knowledge, something completely distinct from Marxism, still does not correct or improve the latter,[137] but can at best imply its more consistent and thorough future development.

While it is true that there is almost a ten year gap between Adler's movement from his stress on Marxism as critique to an ultimately scientistic definition of Marxism, the elements of both interpretations are present in all his works. It is curious, therefore, that interpreters of Adler such as Vorländer, Goldmann and Lichtheim mention his two distinct ways of linking Kant and Marx without seeing the serious difficulty. Let us, however, be clear: critique and science cannot be the same either from a Kantian or a sophisticated Marxist viewpoint. The distinction between critique and science, however, is obliterated by any psychologistic interpretation of Kant on the one hand, and by "scientific socialism" on the other. The fact that Adler cannot see a clear distinction here is an important clue to his continuity with vulgar Marxism.[138]

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137. Max Adler, *Marxistische Probleme* (Stuttgart: Dietz Verlag, 1913), pp. 64-65. On the above point, Adler is hardly consistent. In other contexts he also speaks of Kantian theory as an epistemological foundation and philosophical complement of Marxism. He always has the Kant-Newton relationship in mind, but at times Marx appears as Kant and at other times as Newton. Cf. *op.cit.*, pp. 138-139.

138. In an article heavily dependent on the young Lukács, "Tranzendentaler Marxismus?" *Die Gesellschaft* VIII (Berlin, 1931), pp. 304ff, reprinted in *Kritische Theorie der Gesellschaft*, Vol. IV (Frankfurt/M: Raubdruck, n.d.), the young Herbert Marcuse decisively demonstrated

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It is not as if Adler did not undertake a critique of the materialist orthodoxy of Kautsky and Plekhanov. He consistently argued that Marxism can have nothing to do with a materialist worldview or metaphysics. Marxism, according to Adler, needs the foundation of no comprehensive world-view, and least of all a materialist one. Materialism represents an answer to an ontological question about the essence of the world—an answer that dogmatically states that the world is made of physical matter, the matter of natural science. It is a consistent but closed worldview that reduces everything to matter in motion.[139] But, Adler argues, the so-called materialist theory of history has an entirely different concept of matter: speaking of the material conditions of life, historical materialism always speaks of human and therefore *geistige* conditions.[140] According to Adler, Marx takes from the natural sciences not their concept of matter but their methodological positivism and their stress on causality and law. As a result, Adler maintains that Marx's theory of history should be reconceived and renamed as a social-economic determinism. The new name promises little good, but Adler tries to use it to present a different conception of the *geistige* and the *psychische* than the reductionist views of the orthodox. Already on the level of *epistemology* (being a Kantian) he feels obliged to demolish purely passive theories of consciousness. He shows first of all that while a copy theory of knowledge can be consistently presented by Spinoza, a materialist like Plekhanov cannot call on this much needed support. He correctly stresses that in Spinoza there can be no inter-relation between mind and matter, and indeed this is a precondition for a consistent copy theory of truth. Any philosophical materialism must however speak of a causal or functional reduction of mind to matter, and since the reduction yields a passive epiphenomenal "mind," the ability of this mind to reflect the true arrangement of matter becomes totally mysterious. Materialism and Spinozism are two dogmatic worldviews, according to Adler, whose mixture must be self-contradictory.[141] The Engelsian copy theory, which rests on this mixture, must therefore be discarded. But what about the famous materialist premise about the determination of thought by being? Adler is willing to admit that, as a maxim of investigation, this will facilitate causal explanations of social phenomena by, e.g., linking ideology and economics. But he calls any epistemological extension of the premise an almost archaic form of epistemological naiveté.[142] Given his Kantian viewpoint, this assertion does not even call for a demonstration. Yet, his

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the scientistic character of Adler's Marxism *and* Kantianism. From the point of view of the dialectical theory of Lukács, Korsch and the early Marcuse this was just criticism. But we must follow a rather different approach to Adler in the context of the Second International. Marcuse by the way is the only interpreter who grasps the ambiguity of the Kant-Marx link.

139. Adler, *Marxistische Probleme, op. cit.*, pp. 66-67.
140. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
141. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
142. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

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arguments dealing with social psychology and anthropology clearly imply that the materialist premise has in fact only a carefully limited importance for even the theory of society.

Of all the Marxists, only Adler was sophisticated enough to be able to participate in the famous *Methodenstreit* of the German academic world. In this context, he opposed the Heidelberg Neo-Kantians and Simmel, and argued for the unity of all of the sciences—a unity based on causal natural science. Social science may have human goals and human values among its objects, but this in no way modifies the causal, nomological treatment of these objects.[143] Behind Adler's decision in favor of an outright naturalism lies his acceptance of psychology as the fundamental science of society. For Adler, all social facts, whether political, economic or cultural, were considered psychic. He feared the hypostatization of "society" and considered the socialized individual to be the only agent [*Träger*] of social life. Of course, he realized the problems that an individualistic psychology presented to a Marxist. As a result, he postulated a fundamental anthropological characteristic of man, i.e., to value, and to act according to norms and goals. The most basic of these values and norms is that of social life (based on the recognition of others as men) i.e., unity with other men. Social values, however, lead to a basic antagonism between the individual and the social, because the historical forms of appearance of the drive to unity (e.g., the desire for happiness) implies conflicts and struggle[144] with other men. So far, there is considerable structural similarity between Kautsky's biological view of human nature (antagonism between social instinct and history) and Adler's psychological-anthropological view (antagonism between social values and history). However, at this juncture, Adler's solution reveals a somewhat greater sophistication. While the formal creation of the social lies in the dimension of *Normmässigkeit*, its actual creation is a function of teleological [*zweckbewusste*] labor. Through labor and praxis in general, the laws of inner life become external causality and lead to the realization of values. Thus, causality in social life is not blind, but is guided by ideas and goals.[145] On the other hand, according to Adler, the external causality of economic relations cannot be disregarded. The *possibility* of value realizations depends on freedom of movement provided by the objective development (although this objective development is itself human) of economic life and institutions. Adler emphatically argues that on its own, economic development realizes no values, creates nothing, destroys nothing, changes nothing. But it determines (and here is the limited validity of historical materialism) the limits of the developmental possibilities of social life, and provides means for the realization of these possibilities. The process of production is the machine of social life, but teleological activity is

143. Vorländer, *Kant und Marx, op. cit.*, p. 253.
144. Adler, *Marxistische Probleme, op. cit.*, pp. 9-11.
145. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

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the motor, lending the machine energy and direction. This is Adler's quite ambiguous interpretation of the Marxian statement that we make our history, but not under self-chosen circumstances. Thus, in this context, he comes very close to rediscovering the Marxian notion of *praxis*. Yet, the fact that he ultimately identified the "Marxian" meaning of consciousness as such (the notion of critique) with a deterministic science of society greatly interferes with his analysis. Instead of uncovering the trans-individual subject of praxis, with theory being a moment of this praxis, he is left with individual and particularized subjects and a deterministic science. Thus, he is forced to interpret his goal-conscious human as a being that causes only when it itself is caused, acts when it is acted on.[146] Thus, he locates teleology into a tight system of causality. The result is a series of eloquent statements on *praxis* beginning with Marx's third thesis on Feuerbach and culminating in the unity of science and politics in an *applied science* [*angewandte Wissenschaft*] based on the *consciousness of the necessity of the social process.*[147] For Adler, teleology represented the viewpoint of the individual actor, causality the viewpoint of sociology, and the technology of society or social *engineering* the unity of theory and praxis.[148] His interpretation of the problem of Marxism and ethics must be understood in this context.

Max Adler's overall philosophical viewpoint was consistently dualistic, implying a sharp antinomy between teleology and causality, ethics and science, *Sollen* and *Sein*. Adler resisted both the primacy of the practical *and* the primacy of the theoretical, both the ethical foundation of socialist theory *and* the causal reduction of socialist ethics. He considered his position especially flexible because he was able to integrate ethics itself into his concept of a social science without abandoning dualism. For Adler ethical life, valuation and moral will were immanent causal factors of human history. To this extent, a rigorous causal sociology can consider the ethics of individuals (and the ethics of individuals united in groups) as major historical forces. Indeed, this was the only difference between the causality of sociology and that of physics. On the other hand, no sociology can *evaluate* the contents of values and norms—this is the task of the practical and normative discipline of ethics. Of course, after the evaluation has taken place and actions (in the external world) follow, once again we enter the province of sociology.[149] As a result, Adler vigorously combats the notion (of Hermann Cohen and Vorländer, and even Woltmann to a lesser extent) that socialism can be erected on ethical foundations. Indeed,

146. *Ibid.*, pp. 58ff. The German text in fact states that man is a being "auf das nur gewirkt werden kann, indem es selber wirkt." But what is important for us is that here teleology is encapsulated in an individual otherwise caught in an inescapable chain of causality. In the end, *teleology* is almost as illusory in Adler as in Spinoza or Plekhanov.

147. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

148. Vid. Goldmann, *Dialektische Untersuchungen, op.cit.*, p. 223.

149. Adler, *Marxistische Probleme, op.cit.*, pp. 145-147.

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there will never be socialism *without* individuals considering it a value. Even the recognition of the historical necessity of socialism will not make anyone fight for it. On the other hand, the moral will of individuals (acting causally) is only a necessary and not a sufficient cause of socialism: the causality of institutional and economic development cannot be disregarded. Furthermore, only when objective historical conditions necessitate the fusing of individual moral wills into a mass phenomenon, only then can *ethics* become historically causal, and only then can the *Sollen* be realized in the world, and become *Sein*. When speaking of revolution, Adler *seems* to go beyond the framework of his dualism. He does not in fact because, once again, the over-all question of this revolution is delegated to a causal sociology. The same causal sequence can be evaluated, of course, from the viewpoint of individual ethics (positively evaluated from the viewpoint of the categorical imperative), but this could be once again a totally distinct and separate way of "constituting the phenomena." Thus, Adler managed to develop a far more consistent Kant-Marx synthesis than those of Vorländer, Woltmann et al., who attempted to develop ethical foundations for the whole of socialist theory. Although he was not forced to discard the deterministic dimensions of Marx's thought, Adler managed to show the importance of ethics *within* theory and could even approach the Marxian problematic of theory and praxis. At the same time, he preserved an orthodox Kantian (more orthodox in fact than Kant himself) separation between the practical and the theoretical. This explicitly dualistic framework also served him well in the polemic that he and Otto Bauer waged against Kautsky's total subsumption of ethics within a deterministic theory.

Adler's critique of Kautsky was just the opposite of his critique of Vorländer. Where Vorländer wanted to base socialist theory (for Adler, necessarily the science of causal *Sein*) on moral foundation, on a theory of *Sollen*, Kautsky attempted to reduce all *Sollen* in a causal theory of *Sein*, i.e. a natural scientific materialism. A naturalistic ethics, according to Adler, can explain everything (we should recall that naturalistic ethics is integrated into Adler's sociology) including the historical sources of the *contents* of all ethics, but it cannot explain the binding power and validity of moral maxims, the very *form* of ethical propositions, the form of *Sollen*. To Adler, the *Sollen* implies reconstitution of things (first given in *causal experience*) from the viewpoint of our *subjectivity*: our evaluating activity. The *Sollen* is both the form of our moral sense (conscience) as well as of our moral ideal. For Adler, therefore, it is futile to causally derive either one from empirical self-interest or utility or instinct or struggle.[150] But Kautsky derived the moral sense from a social instinct and the moral ideal from the class struggle. In this context, Adler shows that even if one could causally

150. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-109.

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derive morality ("the unknown") from social instinct ("something less known"), he would have derived only the factual presence of a moral sense and not its binding quality which can arise only from conscious reflection on this fact as something *valuable.*[151] Conversely, even when we are *driven* to an action, we can reflect upon it as a negative value. If the source of condemnation of any other instinct is the social instinct, it remains unexplained why one instinct is *evaluated* over the other.

Adler further demonstrates that the relationship of the class struggle and the moral ideal, involving in Kautsky's case a historical rather than a biological reduction of ethics, is completely parallel to the above problem. No sociological class analysis can yield binding values and ideals. How are we to morally distinguish between the values of one class and those of another? If our answer is based on the harmony of the ideal with objectively understood historical development, then, according to Adler, we implicitly accept development to be unconditionally morally positive. But on what basis? Why should the moral necessity be the realizable? What Adler is driving at is that only on the basis of a *Sollen* can biological, sociological and historical facts be evaluated in the first place. His argument against Kautsky is supported by Otto Bauer who showed, in addition, that no individual could receive any moral clues from historical necessity.[152] Here Kautsky's counter-objection, that in practice it is equally difficult to receive moral clues from the categorical imperative is well founded.[153] It is indeed a bit strange that Bauer and Adler, after demolishing Kautsky, tend to be satisfied with the reaffirmation of the principles and concepts of a completely formally interpreted Kantian ethics, *in spite* of the important critiques of Kant in Hegel and others. There is a dimension in Adler's social ethics, however, that seeks to go beyond a formally interpreted Kant. He was able to fuse the ethical dimension with his sociological theory, arguing the impossibility of deriving a *morally positive social* order from economic development alone. Arguing against Kautsky, he (and Bauer) come close to their other opponents Woltmann and Vorländer, demonstrating the possibility of different social systems on the foundations of a collapsing capitalism. On the old question of socialism and barbarism (Adler adds a new conception of industrial feudalism to the alternatives) only the moral decision of the proletariat *for socialism* can realize this particular alternative. In this context at least, Adler *seems* to give *socialism* a partially ethical foundation.[154] Nevertheless, when he reinterprets his argument, he returns to a rigid antinomy. He asks what can the materialist theory of history offer ethics, and answers "everything and nothing." And

151. *Ibid.*, p. 121.
152. Cf. Otto Bauer, "Marxismus und Ethik," in Fetscher, ed., *Der Marxismus, op.cit.*, pp. 262-263.
153. Kautsky, "Leben, Wissenschaft und Ethik," in Fetscher, ed., *Der Marxismus, op.cit.*, pp. 270-272.
154. Adler, *Marxistische Probleme, op.cit.*, p. 134.

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this answer means that the dimension of ethics that enters into social causality is not ethics at all but a *part* of deterministic sociology (the latter being his interpretation of historical materialism). The moral dimension, however, can have nothing to do with any scientific causal explanation, of historical development or success. Only self-reflection, the critique of practical reason, i.e., Kantian ethics, can confront the moral dimension of individual will and conscience, which for Adler remains an irreducible fact of human existence.[155] Thus, Adler's philosophy consciously remains on the ground of the Kantian *antinomy* of theory (necessity) and practice (freedom). Although he was the only Social Democrat able to evaluate Hegel's contribution to social theory, Adler's understanding of dialectics did not permit him to move beyond the stark restatement of the antinomy.

6. *The Fate of the Dialectic in Social Democracy*

To ask about the fate of the dialectic is to ask about Hegel. In dealing with the relation between the Marxism of Social Democracy and Kant and Spinoza, we have had to deal with "substance" and "antinomies". In Hegel's *Phenomenology* the category of substance moves into that of subject, and that of antinomy unfolds in mediation. These dialectical transitions, however, appear in none of the tendencies of Social Democratic thought: indeed, most theoreticians of the Second International reveal a dismal ignorance of Hegel. Believing that Marx and modern science projected them beyond Hegel, they fell back to pre-Hegelian and at time pre-Kantian theoretical positions. As we have seen, Engels himself, who was able to do better, at times regressed to a naive epistemological realism, postulating two perfectly parallel sets of dialectical "laws" (laws of processes)—with the subjective set being the laws of a slightly (often very naively) historicized natural science. Kautsky's position (he never considered himself an expert in philosophy) was defined by Engels, except that he stressed the "science of evolution" more than his teacher. Vorländer (a revisionist, a Kant scholar and professor!) followed Kautsky's stress but argued that, given the natural scientific theory of evolution, the *only* rational core of Hegel was the dialectic: the rest could and should be discarded.[156] Furthermore, Vorländer denied that Hegel's concepts had much to do with *Capital*, in spite of Marx's claims to the contrary.[157] Along with most of his progressive contemporaries—Marxist, Neo-Kantian or positivist—Vorländer firmly believed that Hegel was a reactionary philosopher of the "restoration", guilty of the wildest philosophical speculations. But this was not all that poor Hegel had to suffer. Eduard Bernstein

155. *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

156. Steinberg, *Sozialismus, op.cit.*, p. 57; Iring Fetscher, "Das Verhältnis des Marxismus zu Hegel," in Fetscher, ed., *Marxismusstudien*, Dritte Folge (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1969), pp. 88ff.

157. Vorlander, *Kant und Marx, op.cit.*, p. 64.

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(who was considered philosophically ignorant even by the philosophically ignorant) also associated him with the opposite error, the error of planting revolutionary illusions into the works of the unsuspecting Marx and Engels. Interpreting the Hegelian dialectic in the most vulgar possible manner, Bernstein argued that dialectic means the imposition of a structure of explosive, self-developing contradictions on a reality that develops, but develops very slowly. As a result, continued Bernstein, Marx and Engels tended to have revolutionary expectations in situations in which sober common sense would have certainly dissuaded them.[158] Bernstein also traced the self-deception of a revolutionary faith in a unified, homogeneous proletariat to the supposed Hegelian requirement of entrusting the dynamic of history to absolute contradiction—to the "negation of a negation."[159] In the context of Engels' natural scientific interpretation of the dialectic, Bernstein may have been correct in sensing the incompatibility of dialectical logic with the logic of empirical natural science, and, given the social theory of Marxist orthodoxy, he had a good justification to escape from artificial theoretical constructs to the safety of "presuppositionless" empirical investigation.[160] Nevertheless, it is clear from Bernstein's remarks that his ignorance of Hegel's work could not have been more complete. Within the whole spectrum of German Social Democracy, only two thinkers seem to escape the charge of "Hegel-Ignoranz": Plekhanov, a Russian, and Adler, an Austrian.

In 1896 Kautsky wrote to Bernstein about Plekhanov: "he is our philosopher, indeed the only one among us who has studied Hegel." [161] Plekhanov may have studied Hegel, but it certainly did not prevent him from transforming the dialectic into a pre-Hegelian deterministic philosophy of substance. Generally, Plekhanov was willing to follow Engels' lead. However, in spite of Engels' stress on Hegel's method as against his system (a stress that Engels himself generally violated) Plekhanov was primarily interested in utilizing the deterministic and reductionist aspects of the Hegelian system. In his 1891 study "Zu Hegel's Sechzigste Todestag," Plekhanov repeated Engels' interpretation of the Hegelian dialectic based on the dissolution of everything stable to processes with one important reservation. This reservation consisted in the acceptance of the cornerstone of the Hegelian system, the notion of Absolute Spirit, which in Plekhanov's eyes at least, was the unified and unchanging principle to which all changes and multiplicity are necessarily reduced. Naturally Plekhanov wanted to have nothing to do with "spirits" and proposed to substitute the necessary laws

158. Bernstein, *Voraussetzungen, op.cit.*, pp. 47-49.

159. *Ibid.*, The neo-Stalinist Althusser's contemporary critique of Hegelian marxism makes the identical point, over and over. Cf. *For Marx*, especially chapter 3. Iring Fetscher has nicely demonstrated the similarities of Bernstein's and Stalin's critiques of Hegel. Cf. "Das Verhältnis des Marxismus zu Hegel," *op.cit.*, pp. 92-93.

160. Cf. Fetscher, "Das Verhältnis," *op.cit.*, p. 94.

161. Cited by Steinberg, cf. *Sozialismus, op.cit.*, p. 58. Steinberg himself seems to agree with this verdict on the basis of rather slim evidence.

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of the economy (or economic evolution) for Hegel's Absolute.[162] It is easy to see that, even as he was honoring Hegel, he was thinking of Spinoza. What he called absolute subject he should have called absolute substance. In Plekhanov's hands, the dialectic turned out to be merely another name for philosophical materialism conceived on a model analogous to Spinoza's philosophy of substance. His *Fundamental Problems of Marxism* (1908) which is a celebration of a completely deterministic philosophy, reveals an unparalleled vulgar materialist reinterpretation of dialectical categories. Thus, for Plekhanov, the "unity" of subject and object means that there is no thinking (subject) apart from body, and that while "I" am a subject for myself, the same "I" is an object for others.[163] This argument, aside from presenting a psychological (and in point of fact "illusory") and irrevocably atomistic concept of subjectivity, reveals an astonishing lack of knowledge of the whole subject-object problem in modern philosophy, i.e., the very *Problemstellung* presupposed by Spinoza and the materialists. When at his best, Plekhanov refers back to Spinoza by way of Engels' "two sets of laws...identical in substance" as equivalent to the doctrine of the unity of subject and object—and this is at least a respectable, though *superficially* non-dialectical position.

It is unnecessary here to present additional dimensions of Plekhanov's concept of the dialectic, especially since we have already presented its equivalent, his concept of materialism. There was definitely no revival of dialectical theory in Plekhanov's works. If he revived anything, he revived the worst pan-logistic aspects of the Hegelian system in the guise of a deterministic materialism or economism. The situation was more complicated and more interesting in the case of Max Adler who tried to salvage aspects of the dialectic in the context of a critique of its systematic or extensional interpretation by Engels, Plekhanov and, in advance, their Soviet followers.

We have already traced Max Adler's partial recovery and subsequent loss of the category of praxis in a deterministic or sharply antinomic metatheory of society (philosophy of social science). Earlier, we attempted to root the ultimate failure of Rosa Luxemburg's social theory in her inability to recover (or reconceptualize) the dialectical basis of Marxian theory. Luxemburg's theory as a whole also culminated in an antinomy: that of mass struggle and historical necessity. The antinomies of Luxemburg and Adler are in part parallel and in part complementary. Luxemburg attempted a dynamic reconstruction of a new Marxian theory for the twentieth century, and failed partially because of her desire to anchor this reconstruction in a historical determinism. Adler could not save the category of praxis because of his own attachment to determinism. On the other hand, he got close to at least partial recovery of the dialectic and

162. The whole argument is presented by Lucio Colletti, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89.
163. Plekhanov, *Fundamental Problems, op. cit.*, p. 35; pp. 37-39.

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failed primarily because he tended toward a flat, undynamic and naturalistic social theory anchored in a vague antagonism of individual and society. Both Adler and Luxemburg insisted on a deterministic social theory: this was the common root of their failure. But while Luxemburg approached the "objective possibility" of dialectical theory, Adler came close to recovering its "subjective possibility."

Max Adler was the first Marxist who undertook, in defense of dialectical theory, a critique of its "extensional" interpretation appearing under the names of dialectics of nature, and dialectical materialism. Adler was so serious about Engels' distinction of method and system in Hegel, that he applied it against Engels' own system. And indeed Hegel's ultimately objectivistic system based on the ontologizing of the concepts of dialectical "logic" had its obvious parallel (in spite of Marx's and Engels' critiques of Hegel's metaphysical pan-logism) in Engels' own objectivistic system. To Adler, Engels' dialectics of nature was a "materialistic" imitation of the Hegelian system, and his theory of knowledge was but an unsophisticated version of Hegel's "Absolute Knowledge". For Adler, the difference between so-called "Absolute Idealism" and Dialectical Materialism was only their rootedness in two different kinds of metaphysics. According to him, both are forms of the philosophy of identity, dogmatically (from the Kantian point of view) postulating the identity of thought and being.[164] Adler argues that the dialectic is highly ambiguous in both Hegel and Engels. As a method, it confronts the forms of thought, but as a metaphysics of identity it imposes the forms of thought on being (Hegel) or the forms of social existence on thought and ultimately on being as a whole (Engels). By stressing the methodological side, Adler hoped to escape the dogmatic philosophy of identity. The foundation of this critical reconstruction of the dialectic once again turned out to be the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant.

To Adler, Hegel's great contribution to philosophy was his realization that the actual processes of thought and discovery do not follow the rules of formal logic. Kantian categories, of course, are deduced from the forms of proposition of Aristotelian logic. In this context, i.e., within the province of the critical self-reflection of thought, Adler considered Hegel to be a step beyond Kant. Hegel, he argues, understood that the actual flow of thought continually moves through oppositions, confronting and overcoming all self-imposed logical limitation and one-sidedness under the category of totality. In this context, Adler recovers the original Hegelian meaning of contradiction consisting not in abstract schematic negation (A/non-A), but in a determined negation (determination and negation) of the contents of the given—a preservation and a cancellation at the same time.[165] Thus,

164. Adler, *Marxistische Probleme, op. cit.*, pp. 20-21 on Hegel; pp. 37-39 on Engels.
165. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-25; 30-33. Adler interprets "thought" psychologistically and not from a transcendental viewpoint.

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Adler restores some sophistication to the concepts of totality and contradiction. His new understanding of these concepts, however, is emphatically confined to thought, and he prefers to sum up oppositions, conflicts and struggles in the social world under the heading of "antagonisms" (rather than deal with them dialectically). In the last analysis, Adler's concept of the "dialectic" preserves an antinomic structure between thought and being for the opposite reason than Engels' conception; it is a *Gedankendialektik* refering to the historicity of the *a priori* categories of thought as has been traced by Adler's own theory of the *social a priori*, and the logical movement of this *a priori* as a principle of research. Both the strengths and the weaknesses of his position are revealed in Adler's interpretation of Marx's method of political economy. By focusing on the concept of category Adler seeks Marx's understanding of the dialectic in an important text generally neglected by his contemporaries: "The Method of Political Economy,"[166] where Marx discusses the meaning of the economic categories. Adler considered this text to be the culmination of the development of the concept of the *social a priori*. And indeed Marx does speak of the investigation of the abstract categories as culminating in the synthesis of a *Gedankentotalität*, a *Gedankenkonkretum*.[167] Adler correctly understands this procedure as the breaking down of the reified illusions [*sachlichen Scheines*] of political economy, and the discovery of their "human-social" foundation.[168] On the other hand, Adler completely disregards parts of Marx's text that are not to his liking. Marx, for example, argues: "The concrete is concrete because it is the synthesis of many determinations, the unity of the manifold. In thought it appears therefore as the process of synthesis, as result not as the point of departure, although it is the real point of departure and therefore the point of departure also for contemplation and representation."[169] Of these two sentences Adler can focus only on the first to maintain a consistent interpretation. Perhaps he assumed that the second sentence is a remnant of a philosophy of identity. Only Lukács who knew the work of Adler, could eventually show that an entirely different interpretation (as against both Kantian and "realist" interpretations) can root the theory and praxis relationship in the critique of political economy.[170] What concerns us here is that Adler, noting that Marx criticizes Hegel for projecting the logical order of the synthesis of the mental concrete into the structure of being,

166. Vid. Marx, "Einleitung" to the *Grundrisse*—a text first published by Kautsky as an appendix to *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie.*

167. Marx, *Grundrisse, op.cit.*, pp. 22. Cf. Adler, *Marxistische Probleme, op.cit.*, pp. 43ff.

168. Adler, *Marxistische Probleme, op.cit.*, p. 44.

169. Marx, *Grundrisse, op.cit.*, pp. 21-22.

170. On this problem, cf. our discussion in *Telos*, no. 11, Spring 1972, "Lukács' Theory of Reification" of the method of *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein.* The young Marx's discussions of the problem of the realization of philosophy in the world also point to the interpretation that will unfold only in Lukács (and Korsch). Cf. Marx, *Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung*, in *Werke*, Vol. I, *op.cit.*, pp. 378ff.

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retreats to a position where the concrete is *only* mental—a position that was impossible for Marx. The real trick would have been to interpret the mental synthesis of the concrete as a step toward the releasing of the synthetic possibilities of a reality already a *totality an sich*, but not yet a totality (e.g., a class for itself or Gattungswesen) *für sich*. Adler cannot do this partly because he did not have the Hegelian category of mediation, but primarily because he did not possess a social theory in which theory could really become a moment of Praxis and his theory was ultimately deterministic. As a result, his *social a priori* had to remain in a contemplative posture *vis à vis* social reality: it could lead to an understanding of social reality only in the same sense that the abstract, idealizing concepts of mathematical physics yield theory in the face of an infinitely complicated cosmos. For Adler Marx becomes the Newton of the social world and he even argues (given his understanding, consistently) that dialectic as *Gedankendialektik* applies equally to social and natural science![171]

From the viewpoint of the historical dialectic, even Adler's connection of nature and dialectics represents a serious limitation.[172] Even though Adler reveals a somewhat sophisticated use of dialectical concepts to confront the problems of historical development (e.g. the issue of reform and revolution), he tries to tie the dialectic of thought at least as a *Forschungsprinzip* to the study of the forms of social "antagonism," and he very much wants to move toward a theory of praxis, in the end his naturalistic and contemplative notion of theory defeats his projects. Historical development in his works is always historical determinism: under the category of causality, social antagonism is a special case of the anthropological opposition of individual and society, and praxis is identified as social-technology. Thus, three different concepts of nature (natural determinism, human nature, technology) defeated in Alder's work the unfolding of a dialectical theory of history.

Max Adler's case is particularly instructive for our treatment of German Social Democracy, because he was the only one within Marxism to undertake a serious philosophical critique of the excesses of naturalistic materialism in the areas of ethics, epistemology and dialectics. Nevertheless, but characteristically, he too succumbed to the charms of naturalistic and scientistic theory. Within the historical framework of Social Democracy, no real breakthrough to a dialectical theory of historical subjectivity was possible. Marxist social theory (especially that of Luxemburg) indeed focused on some elements of social reality that could yield the foundation of

171. Adler, *Marxistische Probleme, op.cit.*, p. 36.

172. Kant, interestingly enough, never tried, and probably opposed, the interpretation of history through the categories under which "nature" is synthesized (causality, substance). Cf. his various writings on problems of history (collected in English trans. in a volume called *On History*, ed. by L.W. Beck [New York: LLA, 1963]). For his interpretation of the "transcendental dialectic" as a critique of naturalism, cf. *Prolegomena zu einer jeden künftigen Metaphysik*, Werke V (Frankfurt/M; Suhrkamp, 1958), par. 60, pp. 239-240.

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dynamic subjectivity, but Marxist philosophy (even that of Adler) was highly successful in subsuming these elements within a smooth unsophisticated determinism. Only a new Marxism that learned some crucial lessons from the neo-idealist defense of subjectivity could *begin* to overcome this determinism, by recovering in the process the original philosophical foundations of Marxist theory itself. But this new Marxism could emerge only in a world-historical context in which Marx's conception of the subjectivity of a revolutionary class could again become plausible.

Here, we come up against the self-chosen limits of this primarily historical study, because the link between the new situation and the new interpretation of Marxism simply cannot be traced through the (in part inadequate) theoretical self-reflection of the old situation. What would be especially interesting to consider, and only a new analysis of the Russian Revolution and the origins of the Communist Parties could do this,[173] is why a movement that initially acted quite "philosophically" (cf. Bloch and Gramsci in this context) was irresistibly drawn toward just the theoretical and philosophical frameworks (i.e. the foundations laid by Engels, Kautsky and Plekhanov) that even the best of the Second International, Luxemburg and Adler managed to in part surpass. And an even more interesting topic of investigation would be the sources of the attraction of the "classical theory" in advanced capitalist countries for Marxist sects and mass parties.

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173. Cf. in this context: K. Korsch, "The Present State of Marxism and Philosophy" in *Marxism and Philosophy*; H. Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism*; M. Merleau-Ponty, "Pravda," in *Telos*, no. 7, Spring 1971; Oskar Negt, "Marxismus als Legitimationswissenschaft," in *Kontroversen uber Dialektischen und Mechanistischen Materialismus* (Suhrkamp; Frankfurt am Main, 1969); P. Breines, "Praxis and its Theorists: The Impact of Lukács and Korsch in the 1920s" in *Telos*, no. 11, Spring 1972; F. Fleron and L.J. Fleron, "Administration Theory as Repressive Political Theory: The Communist Experience" in *Telos*, no. 12, Summer 1972.

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*Forgetting Lenin**

by François George

> "We must do justice to him. He has truly bamboozled me... He is the best professor of hypnotism that I know!"
>
> Lautréamont, *Chants de Maldoror*

I. The Factory.

What is striking in Lenin is that he always speaks the language of the revolutionary technician. The revolution is posed as the end once and for all. It is beyond discussion. The Leninist question "what is to be done?" focuses only on the means and not on the content or the meaning of action. Thus, effectiveness is the main criterion of action. It becomes a question of creating an organization, i.e., of assembling the means and endowing it with maximum effectiveness. Furthermore, organization is not meant to anticipate collective life in the liberated society, but to overthrow existing class domination by better employing its own rules and methods.

This logic of action is doubly capitalistic. It is capitalism which conceives action according to the model of rationality, implements the correct means in order to obtain the best results, and systematically applies them. But, afterward, Lenin never cares to come up with a new type of *praxis* radically different from the existing one. On the contrary.

This is essentially what Lenin himself says in *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*: "...this same 'Practical Worker' of the new *Iskra* with whose profundity we are already familiar denounces me for visualizing the Party 'as an immense factory' headed by a direction in the shape of the Central Committee. 'Practical Worker' never guesses that this dreadful word of his immediately betrays the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual unfamiliar with either the practice or the theory of proletarian organization. For the factory, which seems only a bogey to some, represents that highest form of capitalist cooperation which has united and disciplined the proletariat, taught it to organize, and placed it at the head of all the other sections of the toiling and exploited population. And Marxism, the ideology of the proletariat trained by capitalism, has been and is teaching unstable intellectuals to distinguish between the factory as a means of exploitation (discipline based on fear of starvation) and the factory as a means of organization (discipline based on collective work united by the conditions of

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* The first two parts of this article originally appeared in *Les Temps Modernes*, Avril 1973, n. 321, pp. 1735-1772. The third part has never been published in any language. The English translation is by Ernest Yanarella, Bart Grahl, and Susan Cohen.

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a technically highly developed form of production). The discipline and organization which come so hard to the bourgeois intellectual are very easily acquired by the proletariat just because of this factory 'schooling'. Mortal fear of this school and utter fear to understand its importance as an organizing factor are characteristic of the ways of thinking which reflect the petty-bourgeois mode of life and which give rise to the species of anarchism that the German Social-Democrats call *Edelanarchismus*, that is, the anarchism of the 'noble' gentleman, or aristocratic anarchism, as I would call it. This aristocratic anarchism is particularly characteristic of the Russian nihilist. He thinks the Party organization as a monstrous 'factory'; he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority as 'serfdom' (see Axelrod's articles); division of labor under the direction of a center evokes from him a tragi-comical outcry against transforming people into 'cogs and wheels'..."[1]

It goes without saying that we are again taking the position criticized by Lenin, reinforced by the arguments provided by sixty-eight years of history and of Leninism. At any rate, a nobleman's anarchism is better than the Bolshevism of a big boss.

Lenin not only accepts but vindicates the structure of the capitalist enterprise. In a way, he has created the *capitalist* counter-organization: the explicit aim of the Leninist enterprise is to bring about the revolution and to abolish capitalist exploitation. According to the rules of the system, men are used as means to realize results transcending the system. Within these conditions, however, the revolution must not change anything fundamental. For Lenin, revolutionary organization does not have the function of prefiguring liberated social life. On the contrary: it has to copy the capitalist organization of the collectivity in order to destroy it and bring about a new life. Yet, the Bolshevik organization really prefigures the society after the revolution. The bourgeois boss is simply replaced by a director who is himself subordinated to the party hierarchy: thus, all that was well with capitalist organization can now work even better, untroubled by the fetters of private property.

Lenin never bothers with the prefiguration of the end in the means—something that Rosa Luxemburg had dealt with, and even Trotsky had abstractly developed in terms of morality in *Their Morality and Ours*. Lenin considers organization from a purely technical viewpoint, as if the technique were perfectly autonomous and separate. Since its principles are universal, we must respect them. The capitalist organization of work is not capitalist: it is organization. And since organization is obviously indispensable, if it ultimately entails that men be treated as objects, one must bear with it. The revolution is *beyond*. Leninism implies this altogether illusory,

1. V.I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," in *Collected Works*, Vol. 7 (Moscow, 1965), pp. 391-392.

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actually religious and mythical separation between "this" world and a "beyond" (it is sketched out in Marx when he distinguishes between the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom). In history, however, the "beyond" is simply a continuation of "this" world. Obviously, once in power, the party only applies its structure, its functioning, and its theory of action to all of society. As usual, those who initially believed in the myth are eliminated.

Undoubtedly, there is a positive aspect in capitalism that Lenin uncovers for us and tries to develop. For Lenin, it is a matter of accepting the proletariat *as capitalism has constituted it* in order to carry out a slightly different task. It has been "well-educated" and well adjusted. In other words, the basic personality created by capitalism is the one upon which "socialism" must rest. The construction of socialism presupposes alienation in its most profound sense: submission to authority and repression of individual possibilities of imagination, autonomy, liberty, creativity, i.e., of organization. Thus, it will be possible to bring organization in from the outside: to impose it like a transcendental order just as in capitalism. Today, as a result, we see the French Communist Party defending, almost alone, the educational apparatus of the bourgeoisie, the family, and the schools.

What is operating here is the distinction between the "exploiting" and the "organizing" aspect. If the capitalist enterprise is wicked, it is because it recruits the proletariat into its *nice organization* out of blackmail, and not out of pure seduction. Of course, everything changes with socialist society and even with the Communist party. Here the proletarians would be wrong in protesting since they are not exploited, but only organized. If, just like before, they are reduced to a state of passive instruments of a production that escapes them both in terms of its content as well as its end, all this is ultimately for *their* benefit. Thus, in this situation they enthusiastically accept capitalist alienation: they happily bend to the inevitable constraints of forced labor and merrily produce surplus-value for the bureaucratic class.

Lenin mentions the needs of "highly advanced technology." Technology is presented as an impersonal and impervious force in the same way as *matter* and finally history, understood as the history of matter, is presented within a dogmatic Marxism. Thus, all power to the technicians who know the secrets of technology, and know how to command it while obeying it, and who therefore command others without having to obey them. The politician himself is nothing but the engineer of revolution and of popular happiness.

The principle of bureaucratic power, its guile, depends on this displacement, this dissimulation. It consists in projecting its own absolute power toward an external, inhuman, unprescribable transcendence—an objective God: Matter, History, Technology. By means of them, men find

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themselves legitimately crushed by the Party and by its Leader who, with their aid, negotiate in the general interest with the great forces of the universe. According to Lenin, highly developed technology implies a salutary discipline for workers: it prepares them for their militant roles. Indeed, they must be reduced to the level of impersonal mechanisms performing quasi-automatically fragmented and meaningless operations under the strict supervision of the foreman, according to the division of labor determined up above by a general organization of work in which they do not participate. Lenin and Trotsky were thus eager to adopt what they call the "progressive essence of Taylorism."

From this, one can easily see what a joke the *soviet* is, even if it were to function effectively. Even if workers really participated in it, they could not determine *actual policies*: what structures their everyday life as workers, and what is called *technology*. As usual, the remaining politics is pure representation, spectacle, trickery, sham. The workers would only be able to make decisions starting from the principles of the established power and only in order to rationalize and ameliorate its functioning. Alienation would be properly managed (self-managed) by some workers who would quickly become specialists absorbed by the bureaucracy. This democracy is identical to bourgeois democracy, where citizens are free to decide on trivialities, and do so with gusto for the vitality of the system.

To come back to Taylorism, which had the technical admiration of Lenin and of future Stalinists, what is most interesting is that capitalism itself did not wait too long before criticizing itself on that point. It soon realized that a little more recognition of the worker's humanity, an appeal to his participation, and a certain loosening of despotic factory discipline could only have beneficial consequences for production. But then, the very foundation of its power, i.e., the factory, risked being shaken: thus reform remained largely a pious wish. Modern criticisms of capitalism can easily do justice to this idea of an objective and neutral technology by exposing all that it reintroduces and all that it hides, thus simultaneously denouncing the cunning of bureaucratic power invented by Lenin. *By itself,* this technology is that of capitalism, which is entirely a function of its practice, its techniques of human domination, i.e., its politics.

Discussing the despotism of the factory, Gorz shows its connection with capitalism. The technology of production and the organization of work that it commands has as its objective the rendering of work as productive as possible by imposing on the worker the maximum efficiency through the organization of the means of production and through their objective requirements. "The production process must be organized so that the worker experiences the coercion to maximum output as an unalterable requirement of the machine or an imperative inherent in matter itself. Inexorable and incontestable, this compulsion even seems to be one of the apparently neutral laws of a complex machine beyond volition and

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dispute."[2] Existing technology which reduces the worker to the level of an object must appear to him as "the only possible solution to the technical problems of production." Yet, every machine is a human invention, and in this situation "the invention of non-workers serves the interests of capitalism." Today it is evident that efficiency can be achieved and *even exceeded* if workers participate in the organization of their work. But, precisely for this reason, it is not a technical question. "In fact, the fundamental reason for this compulsion is not the greater efficiency of work which is imposed (forced) rather than partially voluntary. The root of forced labor, and its necessity from capital's viewpoint, lies instead in the *social division* of labor. Capital's aims are foreign to the worker and *must* remain so... Capitalist technology and the capitalist division of labor were developed not because of their productive efficiency *in itself* but because of their efficiency in the context of alienated and forced labor: work subjugated to an alien goal... To make them bow to this will it was not enough that they lose the ownership of the means of production. In so far as possible, they also had to lose control over their functioning. They had to lose what their professional and practical knowledge and competence gave them: the power to take responsibility for running the machines without the concurrence of a hierarchical corps of engineers, technicians, maintenance experts, etc. *Technically*, the factory could dispense with such functionaries; but their *political* function is to perpetuate the workers' dependence, subordination and separation from the means and process of production. By withdrawing the conditions and methods of machine production from the workers' supervision, the factory hierarchy serves, in the last analysis, to make supervision a separate function. Only in this way can the means and process of production be set up as an alien, autonomous power which extracts the workers' submission."[3]

Now, the modern criticism of factory despotism, which also appears as *the consequences and the foundation* of capitalist power, indirectly generates a critique of Leninism. He himself had somehow admitted the possibility by praising the educational merits of the "factory." If, as the capitalists admit, this turns out to be unable to maximize production while it remains bound in its organization to the political requirements of capital, it suffers greatly from its consequences. This critique, unlike the Mensheviks', is particularly effective since it does not deal directly with the *apparent* political conception of Leninism. It should be pointed out that criticisms generated from this viewpoint against Leninism and, subsequently, against Stalinism, have been as numerous as ineffective. The apparatus has always answered with arrogance, looking down from its

2. André Gorz, "The Tyranny of the Factory: Today and Tomorrow," in *Telos* 16 (Summer 1973), pp. 61-67.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63.

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pretended and uncritical efficiency, not especially caring to examine its genuine function—and for good reason. The apparatus has always acted as if, like its critics, it had the "true" revolution as its goal. And the critics have been naive enough to believe in the integrity of Leninism.

Lenin has explicitly praised the capitalist technique of power: it admires it precisely because it anchors power in things, matter, pure objectivity. This positive kernel was to be recovered. In brief, far from being some superior form of evolution, the discipline of the factory is the infrastructure of capitalist *and* bureaucratic power. The superiority of the bureaucratic system lies in this: the enterprise is captured within an institutional apparatus. It is subordinated to the Great Enterprise: the Party. Here is what constitutes socialism's strength: production is structured by the institution, which is itself modeled in terms of the productive capitalist organization...and at the same time, *praxis*, i.e., what is essentially politics, is distinguished as "*poiesis*," as productive action upon nature or matter. Thus, the system has what capitalism lacks: ideological coherence. Actually, in the enterprise as well as in the Party, workers are not supposed to yield to an emeny will, *but to their own*: production here does not have an objective foreign to them such as the accumulation of capital. On the contrary, it has as a goal the realization of their dream: the construction of socialism. Thus, Bolshevism attains this "voluntary engagement" which is absent in capitalism. It was enough to mystify will or desire—a traditional and specific operation of the institution. Leninism provides capitalism with a supplement, an improvement or a perfection. It doubles capitalist alienation, i.e., alienation at the level of production, with institutional alienation.

A careful reading of Gorz's essay sheds a bright light on Leninism which, as we have seen, has set the stage for this *justice*—even if it did not expect it. Gorz shows how the capitalist organization of work is explained by the need to discipline the workers who are forced to realize through their own work goals external to them, which can only be external to them since they are those of the class that dominates and exploits them. What, then, is the meaning of the same organization, transported to the Party? The emancipation of the workers by the workers themselves? By what miracle? No: in both cases the same structure implies and necessarily presupposes the same expropriation. Under these conditions, militants act on behalf of something which is estranged from them as they produce it: the product returns to the rulers (the revolution or, simply, the power of the bureaucratic apparatus). Leninism has confiscated the revolution from the proletariat, it has made it the property of an apparatus and, afterwards, of a class, while it made the proletarians acknowledge this revolution as the expression of their own desire, the realization of their own will.

Here, alienation reaches an insurpassable point: the workers are led to recognize as theirs (the revolution) what is estranged from them (production

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for the benefit of the bureaucracy, the constitution of power for the class that exploits them). And what was truly theirs, the only *thing* that they had in capitalist society resulting precisely from their total expropriation, has become estranged from them through Leninism. Thus, Lenin has carried out an *expropriation* which repeats and completes the capitalist one. It has separated the proletariat from all that was left to them: the means for producing history, behind the pretense of giving them a perfected apparatus better able to carry out this task than their unskilled spontaneous actions versed in economism and trade unionism. Capitalism said: "I am not so systematic. After all, I leave you free to make history." But here come Marx and Lenin. This time, the power to work is absolutely framed. Everything is linked together.

The organizational technique of Leninism is only effective in the context of an alienated revolution. And the hierarchical setting, which Gorz points out in the capitalist enterprise, is immediately found functioning politically and not technically in the Party with its structure, its top directors, its assistant directors, the secretaries, the union bosses, and the official ideologues. In a word, the "professional revolutionaries" whose profession is precisely to remove the revolution from the proletariat, to transform politics into something external and transcendent, requiring their science and their skill.

Gorz shows that the division of labor allows capitalism to pursue its proper goals outside of the inopportune control of the workers. In other words, it allows authority to dispose of the totality unhindered. Actually, authority assumes that the totality can be separated from reality and projected to an external instance. Thus, capitalism atomizes the proletarians, isolates them, prevents them from communicating with each other. The best image of this is provided by the assembly line where management juxtaposes workers of different nationalities: a Frenchman, a Yugoslav, an Italian, a Portuguese, etc. And then, it breaks the worker into thousands of stereotyped gestures external to his personality and having no internal connections. Capitalist authority, management, is thus assured of being the only one in a position of reconstituting the *whole* in its own sphere. It reconstitutes the whole not in reality, but in representation since reality is precisely these atomized workers divided from themselves. The map rules the territory throughout (production thus needs geographers). The world of the proletariat, or rather, all that he is able to perceive of it, is the bolt that he must screw two thousand times a day—three thousand times if possible and if he wants to earn five more francs. The capitalist world is the whole factory, and finally the whole society, the world market...

The division of labor is, first of all, the prohibition of access to the totality. Similarly, it is up to the Political Bureau of the Party to envision the totality. At the base, one hangs posters and distributes tracts. The

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statutes guarantee the impossibility of an action from the base aiming at the totality, i.e., what has been called "exemplary" or "symbolic" action during the decline of Stalinism. The part is submitted to the whole (which is itself submitted to the One), it could not in good logic represent the whole, imply it, and contain it. The action at the base, i.e., militant action, must be solely technical, operational, applying a directive emerging from above, interpreting it if necessary: it must not have meaning in itself. This is why the Communist Party reacts with virulence to prompt or local actions of "leftists" who aim and threaten precisely that totality. If it is forced to pretend to approve of their principles, it opposes them by invoking the "national standard" or even the international one, which indeed it alone controls. We must recall here that the *image of the totality* is the means whereby Marxism has established its *political authority* over the proletariat, the revolutionary movement, and modern history. Communists, wrote Marx in the *Manifesto*, do not have any privileged position: they simply represent the movement as a *whole*. This authority of the principle over the whole, this *a priori* faculty to totalize has been applied particularly in Russia, where the proletariat was very dispersed and without any real coherence.

In 1904, in his critique of *What Is to Be Done?* Trotsky wrote very forcefully: "The organization of professional revolutionaries, or more precisely, its head, becomes the center of social-democratic consciousness while the disciplined performers of technical functions operate beneath that center."[4] In the party, the performers, or the workers of history, are subordinated to a direction representing the totality, to which consequently *all is submitted*. Like capitalism, this direction gathers the effects of cooperation which are projected in it, all the connections being vertical or in any case controlled by the hierarchy. Marx would have been very surprised to learn that his description in *Capital* of the capitalist factory inserted within the general explanation of the functioning of capitalism, could serve as the model of revolutionary organization. It did surprise Rosa Luxemburg: "What is there in common between the regulated docility of the oppressed class and the self-discipline and organization of a class struggling for its emancipation?"[5]

Marx shows how in capitalism the new force created by cooperation functioning like a collective force, does not belong to the collectivity itself but it exists purely for the benefit of authority, i.e., capitalism. The latter, in turn, brings about the collective worker—a sort of omnipresent body whose individuals are its members and of which it is the head: the subject, consciousness and will. "Their union into one single productive body and the establishment of a connexion between their individual functions, are

4. Leon Trotsky, *Nashi Politicheskic Zadachi* [*Our Political Tasks*] (Geneva, 1904).

5. Rosa Luxemburg, "Organizational Question of Russian Social Democracy," in Mary Alice Waters, ed., *Rosa Luxemburg Speaks* (New York, 1970), p. 119.

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matters foreign and external to them, are not their own act, but the act of the capital that brings them together. Hence the connexion existing between their various labours appears to them, ideally, in the shape of a preconceived plan of the capitalist, and practically in the shape of the authority of the same capitalist, in the shape of the powerful will of another, who subjects their activity to his aims."[6]

The essential function of this structure is to keep the capitalist in his position of power. Marx quotes an English journal which mentions some attempts at socialist cooperation: "They showed that associations of workmen could manage shops, mills and almost all forms of industry with success, and they immediately improved the condition of the men; but then they did not leave a clear place for masters."[7] And Marx comments: "How horrible!" This is also the Bolshevik reaction to the attempts at self-administration by the class struggle.

The division of labor, Marx continues, cripples the worker, parcels him out, and incorporates him into a mechanism which exists independently of him. And this fragmented worker is "all the more perfect the more he is limited and incomplete." The "intellectual powers" escape him, since they are only useful at the level of the whole. "What is lost by the detail laborers, is concentrated in the capital that employs them. It is a result of the division of labor in manufactures, that the laborer is brought face to face with the intellectual potencies of the material process of production, as the property of another, and as a ruling power...modern industry...makes science a productive force distinct from labor and presses it into the service of capital."[8]

Lenin has forcefully stressed the fact that the intellectual powers are separate from the workers, but not in order to react against this specific operation of capitalism. On the contrary, he argues for its reproduction in the revolutionary Party, where the intellectual powers of the leaders must similarly confront the workers. Lenin speaks of the submission of the part to the whole: that means to the totality *in thought*, represented by authority and ultimately by the Leader who is precisely the Thinker of the totality. This "submission of the part to the whole" that the Party is supposed to organize for the good of all, ultimately proves to be the submission of all to the One, as Trotsky in 1904 had foreseen with remarkable clarity: The organization of the Party is substituted for the Party, the Central Committee for the organization and finally a single dictator substitutes for the Central Committee.

The capitalist enterprise organizes and disorganizes the working class. It organizes it in subjugating it to the production under its direction. It

6. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I (Moscow, n.d.), p. 331.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, p. 361.

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disorganizes it, in preventing it as much as possible from recognizing itself as a class and from organizing itself by monopolozing communication. Likewise, and in a more efficient way, since it officially integrates the movement of struggle and of class-consciousness, the Party is at the same time the organization and the disorganization of the proletariat. As was well illustrated by Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewsky in their "Letter to the Polish Workers' Party," in giving it to them, the party *deprives* the proletariat of its organization. We have seen the techniques of division employed by capitalism. They operate on two levels: the first is the atomization of the workers, the second is the separation of the worker from the global work process. At each of these levels, the operation of capitalism may be threatened. The workers could organize themselves: e.g., they could recognize themselves by forming a class But here is where the Party comes in which wisely governs this totality. Thus, the danger can be averted in modern capitalism. Yet, workers can regroup at the base by constituting what the uneasy sociology has called "informal groups" (since they have the audacity to escape both capitalist forms as well as those of the Party and of trade unions). These can have a certain impact by halting production in a certain workshop and subsequently in the whole factory. But, with the help of unions, usually their danger is easily averted. On the other hand, the workers can intervene on the content of their labor by applying their own norms, reorganizing it in their own way, etc. These new forms of strikes have spread during the last five years, notably in Italy. Thus, Gorz tells us, in a few factories some original forms of struggle have begun to clash with the wild resistance of management which (with the diligent aid of trade unions) tries to reestablish the classical political principles of representation. Actually, this movement of *autonomous organization* of the workers, starting from their work, raises again the question of peaceful coexistence in the factory and consequently raises the question of the very existence of unions and of the Communist Party. And these are all the more threatening since if workers reconsider the question of the division of labor in the factory it is not to accept it in their own organs of struggle! These workshop and assembly-line committees elected and recallable by the base are not at all Leninist. This autonomous organization of the proletariat, based on the very organization of work and within the anti-capitalist conflict, radically modifies the class struggle. The owner, the union, or the political lealder, the technician with the demands, are all incriminated together. The liquidation of the Communist Party and of its reduced Trotskyist or Maoist models is in sight. The Communist Party's frantic opposition to all modifications in the factory's power structure as well as its incredible defense of hierarchy is well known. If all this were altered, its own Leninist structure would also collapse since the autonomy of workers evidently is not compatible with the autonomy of their representation. Most of all, it would collapse since alienation is the *same* in both spheres: the maintenance of

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the capitalists' order in the world of work, in the enterprise, is the absolute condition of the Party's survival. For Lenin it is well and good that the Party structurally resemble the capitalist factory. Incidently, this must imply that the socialist factory resembles, to the point of being mistaken for it, the capitalist factory. But this is only in appearance, since the socialist factory belongs to the State which is itself controlled by the Party, and that changes everything.

Lenin appreciates the capitalist factory for the same reason that the latter is pleasing to itself: not because it is particularly efficient, which is wrong, but because it is capitalistic. What holds Lenin is not the economic side directly, but the political, the structure of power: in "socialism" politics stands over the economic. In the capitalist Enterprise, society is not social by itself but only through the mediation of a socializing foreign element, capital, which at this level is primarily defined as *power*. The individual is lost at the same time that the universal is *appropriated* and localized in the sphere peculiar to management. Power carries out a double operation of dispersion and regrouping which permits it to manipulate the collective at will. On the other hand, the very totality of work and of its product does not obtain in the world of work, but only in the world of power. Marx writes that "a body of men working in concert has hands and eyes both before and behind, and is, to a certain degree, omnipresent."[9] But it is not so much the collective worker who is omnipresent but, through him, the system itself. Such is the principle of the totalitarian Party.

At any rate, placed in capitalist conditions, organized according to the same structure, the proletarians produce something which expropriates them: the product of their action does not return to them. The revolution can be substituted here for value; it escapes them, dominates them, and exploits them. The militant is labor-power: a specialized hierarchical work organized from above and isolated from the immediately lived reality. It is a question of producing history for the benefit of its bureaucratic management. Militants shape historical reality in the mystified world of phenomena. The managers have to deal with History-Value: they normally deal with the gains and the surplus-value. The Party transfers to the world of *praxis* what in bourgeois society obtains only in the decisive sector of production: in deciding from its technical perfection, it recaptures the *political* apparatus of the capitalist factory. It transforms the model of capitalist organization into an institution. Now, in bourgeois society, capitalist thinking brings about the decline and fall of institutions. Marx saw this very well. The *tour de force* of Leninism was to make what subverts institutions into the principle of a new institution. To do this, it has simply replaced the accumulation of capital with the construction of socialism in

9. *Ibid.*, p. 327.

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people's consciousness. Capitalism operates much too openly and is susceptible to criticism. But precisely such criticism can become its best reinforcement. Embodied in an institution, it can make capitalism institutional.

The Bolshevik factory produces the anti-commodity: revolution. As with capitalism, men are employed for the achievement of an end which is external and opposed to them, an objective which escapes them, and which expropriates them even more. It is this exploitation which actually exceeds by far the limits of strict economics. The capitalist enterprise and the Leninist Party put to work the modes of production of the *foreign object*, which brings about the expropriation of the very men who produce it. This secret of production of alienation had been discovered by the Church: the object then was called God. This is always an object of dreams, of desires. It is capital—tied with the paraphernalia of the object. Or it is the revolution. It is also marked by a prohibition: capital is forbidden to the proletariat and, in a sense, to capitalists as well, for it is never achieved, never truly realized. The revolution is forbidden even more by the Leninist bureaucracy if it is possible for the proletarians since this bureaucracy also forbids it to itself without actually faring any worse for it. Nevertheless, in a crisis situation it must brandish before the people its image of the impossible revolution, giving as an example to the masses, with possibly a few supporting citations from Lenin, the prudence of its desire. In both cases, the object contains the infinite: infinite is the accumulation of capital as well as the postponement of the revolution. But here the advantage is that the proletariat is integrated, whereas within capitalism it is too visibly excluded no matter what is done to make it participate. Capitalism lacks the Church.

The Party integrates the Church with the factory. While the factory practices a politics of desire, finds images in which to capture it, the Church becomes productive. Time is displaced by eternity, history by myth, and the people by obedience. The Party is General Motors with a historical creed, a world view, a universal hope. What is the Bolshevik Revolution? It is *the capitalist factory plus the institution.*

II. The Church.

The necessities inherent in the organization of labor and in the scientific action on social nature justify the Party's hierarchy. Usually, this reduces its militants to technical functions. For the Party, an action must never be seen as an end in itself but only partially so—as an occasion for the proletariat to discover itself, learn its strength and its ability for autonomous social life, to organize and possess itself. Controlled by the directors, an action is never more than a means by which the apparatus brings pressure to bear, obtains negotiation, reinforces its own position, prepares for elections, or acts nationally against the bourgeoisie's representatives. All this is integrated in the adroit strategy by which, in the end of ends, it will lead the people to

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socialism. Leninism subjects us to a practical, conditional imperative: *if* you want to make the revolution, *then* you must build a centralized party. Be serious, comrade, historical action (*praxis*) has its rules, exactly like technical operations on matter. Lenin is entirely in the objective. He mercilessly derides the subjectivism which concerns individual destinies, since the class struggle determines the course of the world. Attempting to criticize idealism, his philosophy is above all a refusal of subjectivity.

Lenin says nothing about the subjective roots of the revolutionary project. For him, they do not exist: individual revolutionary will is an effect of the objective process at work in things. It is not individuals who act: history is not made on the individual level but results from the objectively determined action of classes. It is absolutely useless to pay the slightest attention to the movement by which an individual or group enters the objective course of revolutionary struggle, or to discover what values are involved in that—to explore the articulation of desire and history. History has nothing to do with such questions. If you do not base yourself on the struggle of the working class, you do not count: you are lost.

Such is the official theory. It applies inversely—but not for everyone. First, the Party is brought forward as Subject. Since the proletariat is not the historical subject but, following Marxism, the Party requires one, it takes this role itself. Rosa Luxemburg lucidly discerned this aspect of Leninism: "In Lenin's overanxious desire to establish the guardianship of an omniscient and omnipotent Central Committee in order to protect so promising and vigorous a labor movement against any misstep, we recognize symptoms of the same subjectivism that has already played more than one trick on socialist thinking in Russia... For the first time, bases for the formation of a real 'people's will' are laid in Russian soil. But here is the 'ego' of the Russian revolutionary again! Pirouetting on its head, it once more proclaims itself to be the all-powerful director of history—this time with the title of His Excellency the Central Committee of the Social Democratic Party of Russia."[10] But as Trotsky saw, the Party is only a sham subject; and, more imperious than ever, the subjective function eventually reestablishes itself in a single individual. Having won out—by his individual qualities, no doubt—over the other individuals naturally pursuing the same goal within the Party's managerial apparatus, *one* individual comes to dispose of absolute power over these great objective entities, the Proletariat and the Revolution. Becoming a pure desire for power, the desire for individual affirmation advances in disguise and achieves its ends, protected by official ideology. The negation of subjectivity results in its triumph in a Stalin or a Mao. But these sumptuous subjectivities are *identified with objectivity*: in the face of That, the individuals

10. Rosa Luxemburg, "Organizational Question of Social Democracy," *op.cit.*, pp. 129-130.

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who are simply part of the "masses" can merrily negate themselves.

Strangely enough, for over half a century many people projected their *personal* aspirations for the transformation of life and the overturning of the social order in this personnage and this doctrine. It was *personal* since that is the only kind of motivation for each of us. Whoever defines himself as a revolutionary militant engages in action defined as objective and impersonal. Is he trying to lose himself? Is Leninism an opiate of the people? During the long, miserable epoch when a quote from Lenin was an unanswerable argument, no one remarked on the paradox that managers of any stamp, and then militants, became forthwith self-conscious in History. Perhaps it is time to analyze the *seductiveness of Lenin.*

For Lenin, we must first of all submit to the practical imperative bound up with the objective structure of the world, which can be known thanks to Marxist science. Thus we must listen to its reformulation of Archimedes' principle: "Give us an organization of revolutionaries, and we will overturn Russia!"[11] This is Lenin the technician, the engineer of History. But by the same stroke, the Revolution appears in the guise of the categorical, unconditional imperative. It is necessary to make the Revolution because the Revolution is necessary. It is unquestioned. Keep your personal reasons to yourself. As sovereign transcendence, the Revolution pertains to an objective order where universal History unfolds. Besides, the end which must be pursued, communism, is already virtually present in it: and to politics falls the task of finding the strategy and tactics on a human level to guide the masses.

Whereas bourgeois thought distinguishes them, Lenin intermingles technique and morality without envisaging action governed by any other criteria. This anti-Czarist Kant simply reunites the two kinds of imperatives.[12] Here, the moral law is the law of nature. But one cannot let oneself go: God is omnipotent and thus, in a sense, wills everything that happens. This does not dispense the believer from conforming his desire to the will of God, and the Church controls him. Anyone who has frequented the Party knows the moralism which reigns there and which can emotionally conjure up Marxist utopians who want to surpass morality. The difference between the Party and the Church is that in the Party no direct commandment applies to sexual life: problems are not treated by the priest in his confessional but are displaced and transposed. The question is not whether you want to sleep with your mother, comrade, but the struggle against global imperialism. Thus the Party displaces the problems created by the establishment and confirms what is established, giving it unforeseen assistance. The basis of oppression remains intact: it must be used again.

11. V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?* (New York, 1969), p. 124.

12. That Kant was a rigorous bourgeois philosopher and Lenin, also a bourgeois philosopher, but a poor one, is only of relative importance here.

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The reference to technique permits a manipulation of desire: a very different technique. Apparently a technician, Lenin put together an organization, an institution, which far exceeded the realm of rationality—as it proved by functioning imperturbably in all conditions other than those of 1902 Russia. The technical imperative thus hides the absolute ethical imperative. Revolution must be presented as a necessity on the objective plane as much as it is on the moral plane: not as something desired but as something which *must* be done. Lenin rendered a great service to the unhappy consciousness by presenting the revolution as a technical affair as well as the effect of a transcendent law. He sponged off its culpability: there is no culpability in the revolt since it involves a world of objective, quasi-material forces and proceeds according to the superior Will of History.

According to Descartes, it is better to want to change one's desires than the order of the world. Thus, the order of the world is not to be changed capriciously. Revolution is not made because one wants to make it or because it is a pleasure, as the petty-bourgeois simplemindedly imagines. History amply justifies this attitude: it shows that revolution is made only to have a rough time once again. Like Kant's moral law, the Revolution hurts. It is necessary and obligatory. In a sense, no one is responsible for it. Setting out to destroy the bourgeois world, however, makes one not less respectable, serious, or decent than the decadent bourgeois, but *more* moral. One becomes militant not to relish idleness or play: on the contrary. In short, you have nothing to reproach yourself for: you have not chosen the easy way.

Reading Lenin, it is impossible to discover the slightest reason to become a revolutionary. *This is what makes him irresistible.* Christ speaks explicitly to desire: *man does not live by bread alone.* He also gives him speech, the bread of truth. He consoles, heals, and works miracles like Mao. There is none of this in Lenin. He certainly gives speech and truth, but only what is necessary for effective action. Also, at long intervals, repressive platitudes escape from him as they do from any devoted and continent provincial bourgeois: but they are much less repressive than his general attitude. Lenin's talent is to play on the contrary effect of negation followed by repression. Everything is definitely possible in history: Leninism is reversed Christianity.

Lenin's strength is that he says nothing about love. He dissolves individual revolt in the necessary and the general. The negation of subjectivity is his subjective position. This is salvation and its price. As Freud said, men will pay dearly for someone to deliver them from themselves. Lenin is a nice fellow. Both the world and yourself are insupportable; you want to break the jaw of your boss or the first cop you see, or your father's. You do not know what to beat your head against, and in despair you may be capable of destroying yourself—and then along comes that young fellow who, with Father Marx, replaces your unproductive, solitary, subjective,

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purely negative malaise in a cosmic historical order. He explains everything to you by the laws of society, matter, and evolution, and shows you the way out. And he is not a mystic but a realist, a technician who has already had a successful revolution in Russia: he bases himself on science, dialectic and electrons. He gives you a card to his Party, where you will only have to do what Science tells you through the intermediary of the directors, who have proved Objective Social Being and received confidence from it. And you can repeat all this to the proletariat, which has great need of direction and has the habit of being directed: it has been submitted to the good school of the factory and does not expect you to appreciate "the richer store of knowledge and the wider political outlook which he finds among Social-Democratic intellectuals."[13]

You want to see the country and find love and adventure? Join the army. You want to change life? Join the Party. You feel revolutionary? *Then*, refer to Lenin: he is your patron. You are not completely lost to Western society: there is an institution to recuperate you. It will teach you the truth of your refusal, your protest, and your revolt. Everything is written in the forty-five volumes of comrade Lenin's complete works, published by Moscow. If you want to serve the revolution and the proletariat, and above all if you want to think for yourself, begin by reading this. Instead of letting you dangerously invent, the Party will give you a job, methods, a structure, and a model. If you are not quickly disgusted, then there is nothing to be feared from you.

With Lenin, subversive desire regains order and is delivered of its anguish and culpability. One takes it to the Law and the Father, but one does no wrong: one has simply recognized a Law and a Father both more effective and more authentic. Distracting desire and expropriating its bearers is the operation of the Leninist institution. A philosophy helps: Marxism. For Lenin, Marxism is not critical thought about existing reality but a "world view," a "system" whose *closure* he incessantly asserts. Marxism "completes" the great modern currents of thought: it is not the expression of a rough-hewn consciousness in the proletariat but is initially constituted *in the head* of the cultured bourgeois intellectual. Moreover, thought and consciousness are products of the human brain, that is, of nature, and thus necessarily conform with nature—any error results from petty-bourgeois subjectivity. This theory of truth accords with Descartes', except that Descartes had *explicit* recourse to God to guarantee the agreement of subject and object. We must be content with Stalin and Mao. If ideas are reflections, reproductions of the real in itself, then where does negation come from? It does not yet exist. Above all, where do *desire* and the *project* come from? But for Lenin everything is complete and objective, and nothing is missing. The Leader's mind adequately reflects the reality of the revolution up to its achievement. Thus Marxism is a system of knowledge

13. V.I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," *op.cit.*, p. 395.

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for knowing nothing: for excluding and obliterating what functions effectively in history, which it must distort in order to use.

Leninism regresses from philosophy, which is linked with history and thus never arrives at closure. The authority of Lenin's affirmations, his incredibly dogmatic tone, and the illusory benefits to be drawn from all this, gain the pseudo-coherence of a system and prevent every doubt or opening. *This is closed.* Lenin substitutes myth for history as well as for science by parading a mythical science. He insists on the "scientific" character of Marxism, which according to him *gives laws* of social evolution, socialist revolution, and the building of communism. What power is gained by those who have this knowledge! Since science is the consequence of power and its alibi rather than the reverse, what really occurs is that all concrete movement is *de facto* reintegrated, controlled, channeled, monopolized, and exploited. "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."[14] The movement does not engender theory: theory comes from without. Thus history follows the "straight road" according to a set plan. Lenin calls this admirable science "of the general laws of the world and of thought" dialectics. Even Hegel never dreamed of a thought so absolute as to consummate history in the State. But Lenin pays him homage: without him "scientific socialism... would never have come into being."[15] He understands little of Hegel but judges it opportune to refer to him in order to augment the systematic closure of his thinking (to the degree that the questionable task of reading the whole *Logic* outstrips the capacities of the prole "cut off from culture"). Lenin the philosopher also teaches us that freedom is the understanding [*l'intelligence*] of necessity: this is a warning. Furnished with dialectical science, power knows how things go and can follow their regular development. In the workers' state we need only follow the course of Marxism to be free. Above all, in his *reconstitution* of Marxism, Lenin introduces the urgence of *the law* in order to have *a foundation of power* along with the doctrine.

Power can evidently put up more easily with mythical thought than with critical thought. Revolutionary practice, or its official version, turns into ritual and aspires to *repetition*. Arguing from their science and their *affiliation* (e.g., the Trotskyists), the experts in revolution attempt to repeat what the Father-Hero did—which is also a good way to avoid a *real* new beginning for revolution. Lenin thus depends on "science" because it guarantees the external position of power: "historical materialism first made it possible to study with scientific accuracy the social conditions of the life of the masses and the changes of these conditions."[16] But science has

14. V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, *op.cit.*, p. 25.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
16. V.I. Lenin, *The Teachings of Karl Marx* (New York, 1930), p. 16.

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also invented movement without desire. Aristotle has been relegated to the catacombs of ideology along with his movement inspired by the charm of the Sovereign Good and determined by the desirable. All sense experience, for which movement is always that of a being which follows (or flees) something, is banned along with him. Lenin returns to the scientific, technistic conception of efficient cause—physical determinism—applied to history: objective conditions. On the contrary, to genuinely conceptualize the revolution outside of the framework of bourgeois thought, it must be considered (not without bearing objective conditions in mind) that one makes revolution because it is desirable, it is attractive, it is an object of love, and in the strong former sense it is *interesting*. But then the cards must be laid on the table: one cannot profit from negation, that is, from Lenin's effect. Since in the human world there is no resort but desire, Leninist passion is love for the revolution perverted as love for the Leader, desire for a new life denatured by the institution—otherwise there would be no difference between the Party and the factory.

Rosa Luxemburg wrote that the proletariat was inculcated with this charming discipline not only by the factory but also by the barracks. In fact, Lenin often spoke of the Party as an army. The Communist International stated in 1920 that any Communist Party must be organized in the most centralized way: an "iron discipline bordering on military discipline" must be accepted. Such was the interest in literally interpreting the Marxist notion of class struggle. The army permits the justification of the hierarchy, the Leader's power, and the maintenance of the psychological and institutional structure: ultimately it allows the possibility of a *coup* [*coup de force*] *against the masses* as well. The militarization of work under Trotsky's authority eloquently demonstrated that.

Trotsky's interpretations of "our militarization" merits a moment's attention. Our militarization, he says, is distinguished by its goal just as the proletariat organized for its emancipaton is distinct from the bourgeoisie organized for its exploitation. Strangely enough the proletariat is to be organized *in the same way* for its emancipation as for its exploitation—but this is a constant of Leninism. Trotsky makes it clear that the militarization of work is not a metaphor. "No social organization except the army has ever considered itself justified in subordinating citizens to itself in such a measure, and to control them by its will on all sides to such a degree as the State of the proletarian dictatorship considers itself justified in doing, and does. Only the army...was endowed with powers of demanding from each and all complete submission to its problems, aims, regulations, and orders. And it achieved this to the greater degree, the more the problems of military organization coincided with the requirements of social development." [17]

17. Leon Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism, A Reply to Karl Kautsky* (Ann Arbor, 1963), p. 141.

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"Men have adopted the law of perpetual constraint... The right to live where they please, say what they think, and dress as they like are benevolently lost. Henceforth, an order suffices to fix them here, convey them over there, separate them from their families, or remove them from their interests. One word from a leader makes them get up, walk, run, rush into bad weather, or deprive themselves of sleep or nourishment, and suffices to shut them in a camp and urge their toil. These men do not govern their lives: that their limbs be broken and their remains scattered is their soldierly function... Armed force is inconceivable without a separate spirit which organizes and energizes it."—This last quote, however, is from DeGaulle's *Le Fil de l'Epée!*

Was it possible to do otherwise in 1920 Russia? The question is scholastic. All this means only one thing: the revolution escaped from the proletariat and no longer responded in the least to its desire. Trotsky fell into gross and grievous contradictions in explaining that the proletariat itself, distrusting its own weaknesses, demanded its own subordination to the strictest discipline. Demonstrating incomparable enthusiasm for the revolution, they nonetheless felt that this enthusiasm was insufficient and that the entire coercive apparatus of the army had to be added. The whole question is *who* holds power, says Trotsky. In the army it is the generals.

According to Trotsky all forms of organization including military organization are only weapons in the hands of the working class in power. There is a return to arms because the means are always the same and only the end changes. In a capitalist society, Taylorism augments exploitation; but under socialism it increases socialist production. For socialism as for capitalism, production is the dominant imperative. But productive technology was invented by the bourgeoisie, and there is only one: it involves an education which represses man, that "lazy animal." For example, says Trotsky, there is a need for "a new religion in the form of the Reformation, which combined the free soul with free trade and free labor. It found for itself new priests, who became the spiritual shop-assistants, pious counter-jumpers of the bourgeoisie. The school, the press, the market place, and parliament were adapted by the bourgeoisie for the moral fahioning of the working-class. Different forms of wages...are merely changing methods in the hands of the bourgeoisie for the labor mobilization of the proletariat. To this there are added all sorts of forms for encouraging labor and exciting ambition. Finally, the bourgeoisie learned how to gain possession even of the trade unions, i.e., the organization of the working-class itself; and it made use of them on a large scale, particularly in Great Britain, to discipline the workers. It domesticated the leaders, and with their help inoculated the workers with the fiction of the necessity for peaceful organic labor, for a faultless attitude to their duties."[18] Socialism, as history shows,

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

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must also do this; but...for socialism! Ultimately what changes in all this is only the religion. But the transformation of institutional structures, that is, of the control of life, cannot be called fundamental.

Rosa Luxemburg clearly perceived the *institutional* nature of Bolshevism as "the sterile spirit of the overseer, not a positive and creative spirit"—the same obsessional character found in the cell secretary and the high school principal. The managing organ of the Party emphatically defines itself primarily by its negative role of prohibition: it seeks first and foremost to control, stifle, and limit. The only possible outcome is extreme conservatism; and a profound question must be asked: What is conserved?

This reveals the education Bolshevism intends for the proletariat. But if Leninism was reduced to this, it would hardly have succeeded. The internalization of repression is as strong as the hold of the authoritarian armor, in Reichian terms. Still, people do not rush into factories or barracks. Obviously the Party cannot *merely* replicate the capitalist factory. What is missing in the factory is primarily *faith*: the worker does not believe in capital. This cult is reserved to the capitalist and does not exert its integrative function on workers. The attempts in this regard to exalt job and career advancement, commodities for all, and universal consumption became trivial. Lenin saw this dimension clearly: "to unite all these tiny fractions into one whole, in order not to break up the movement while breaking up its functions, and in order to imbue the people who carry out the minute functions with the conviction that their work is necessary and important, without which conviction they will never do the work, it is necessary to have a strong organization of tried revolutionaries."[19] Here is the Party's difference from the factory: the Party executive accomplishes his fragmentary task with faith, and he is flexible.

As in the factory, individual differences are effaced in the Party, but each member maintains a positive relation to the transcendence: revolution, embodied in one man, replaces capital. As Trotsky said, "Nature has done well to put the embodied image of revolutionary thought and the indominable energy of the proletariat into one man." In the framework of Leninist materialism, this phenomenon can be explained only as an intelligent choice of Nature or the Providence of matter. But in fact, it is primarily due to the institution: it is the structure of collective formation explained by Freud, which involves collective organization around an image, an embodiment, a concentration of its own energy.

First, everyone maintains a libidinal relation with the Leader and identifies secondarily with others, recognizing them as "comrades." The Leader attracts their desire to his person and gives them his law. He is identified with law and value. Lenin is the Founder *par excellence*: founder of the Party and the "workers' " State. He lays down the law, which his

19. V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, *op.cit.*, pp. 126-127.

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subalterns and successors need only observe with "the sterile spirit of the overseer." For every member of the collective—all defined as identical by this relation—this law becomes the content of his superego. Thus, the universal is immanent in the individual, and an entire doctrine explains this immanence. Each proletarian (who already, according to capitalism, was only an interchangeable example of his class defined as a simple collection) is only a fragment, a member of the world proletarian family whose father is in Moscow.

We have spoken here only of the identification of the prole; Lenin is his "conscience." But there is a hierarchy in the identification. There is also the apprentice bureaucrat who takes himself for Lenin. In good Hegelian logic, the sacrifice which he thinks he is making of his social success gives him the right to some mastery. To students, Leninism offers a career opening with a bonus of risk and adventure. Leninism's main historical contribution has been to create the new quasi-bourgeois, intellectual profession of manager of the proletariat, the revolution, and then all of society.

Lenin appears as *the professional.* Does he like his calling? He does not have the subjective weakness to say no. A mathematician cannot make his taste for mathematics a stage in his reasoning: love of science cannot be the object of a scientific proposition. The scholar as such never encounters this problem; he mentions it only marginally and might just as well say that he loves spearfishing and butterfly-catching as much. Scientific Marxism swallows up everything in the objective starting with the desire of the Leader himself, the embodiment of historical necessity. Lenin does his duty. He does not joke about discipline and is as hard on himself as he is on others. He is a good example of *autonomy* (in the Kantian sense). One can identify securely with him: he is not a dreamer ravaged by contradictions or a neurotic revolving in the circle of his problems. He is a solid, implacable man who has formed history. And this absolutely positive being is himself perfectly identified with his function, his historical task. This materialist saint ignores doubt and questioning: his certainty is foolproof. He works in the Revolution as others work in the State. Moreover for him the Revolution has in it something of the State, since it is already instituted and inscribed in matter according to Marxism: it must be governed and managed and its authority respected. The Party is the synthesis of State and Revolution: the Revolution as State.

In the person of Lenin, everything seems subordinated to the revolution just as he subordinates everything in society to it. But, for him, the revolution is not a *total* cultural and human phenomenon but, on the contrary, is limited to taking power. Lenin's obsession is to seize power, to seize the State: everything is determined by this end. Lenin's stubborn will was bent on destroying the State. Lenin has two conceptions of the State, and shows a sort of ambivalence. In *State and Revolution*, where there is a State there is no freedom: this thesis borrowed from anarchism can just as well justify

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totalitarianism. In 1919, he spoke a somewhat different language to the students at the University of Sverdlov. After destroying the idea that the State is "something divine and superhuman," he defined it as a pure and simple machine of oppression. But a machine which the proletariat has appropriated and uses against the exploiters. "When the possibility of this no longer exists we shall consign this machine to the scrap-heap."[20] The withering away of the State was postponed for a long time. When would there be no exploiters? Now they are in the State! Thus, Lenin attempted to wrest its weapons from the bourgeoisie and turn them against it: after the factory, the State. Absolutely bad insofar as it belonged to the bourgeoisie, the State is relatively good (at least!) when the Party has made it its own.

As expressions of desire, art and literature do not deserve privileges and must instead be rigorously subordinated to politics. Some people make nonsense of the revolution and interpret it according to their fantasies. "It is a shame to have voted for five thousand copies of Mayakovsky's poem *150,000,000!* Among works of this kind it is necessary to publish only one, in no more than fifteen hundred copies, for libraries and maniacs," Lenin told Lunacharsky, whom he wanted "to chastise for his futurism" and who vainly tried to defend it by asserting that the poem had an explosive success among the working public. Lenin envisaged the promotion of a proletarian culture with extreme distrust, instead sanctioning the adaptation of bourgeois realism. He was equally irritated when in a discussion of *Proletkult* he addressed these equations to Bukharin, without reply: "Proletarian class equals Russian Communist Party equals Soviet State." Lenin had the greatest admiration for one book, Chernyshevsky's *What Is to Be Done?*, a populist, moralizing novel which he said he had "ploughed through from top to bottom."

One of Gorki's memories should be cited here. Lenin heard the *Appassionata* and said: "I know nothing which is greater than the Appasionata; I would like to listen to it every day. It is marvelous superhuman music. I always think with pride—perhaps it is naive of me—what marvelous things human beings can do!... But I can't listen to music too often. It affects your nerves, makes you want to say stupid, nice things, and stroke the heads of people who could create such beauty while living in this vile hell. And now you mustn't stroke any one's head—you might get your hand bitten off. You have to hit them on the head, without any mercy, although our ideal is not to use force against anyone. H'm, h'm, our duty is infernally hard!"[21] Little more was needed for Freud to make a psychological portrait of Wilson.

Above all, Leninism is the idea that, by itself, the proletariat cannot

20. V.I. Lenin, "The State: A Lecture Delivered at the Sverdlov University July 11, 1919," in *Collected Works*, Vol. 29 (Moscow, 1965), p. 488.

21. Maxim Gorki, *Days with Lenin* (New York, 1932), p. 52.

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accomplish the mission which, according to Marxism, history gives it. "The spontaneous working-class movement is by itself able to create (and inevitably does create) only trade-unionism, and working-class trade-unionist politics is precisely working-class bourgeois politics."[22] The proletarian politics of the bourgeois intelligentsia must be substituted for the spontaneously bourgeois politics of the proletariat. "The theory of socialism...grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, by intellectuals.... In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose altogether independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement; it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of thought among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia."[23]

This borders on idealism: at least it finally refers to class struggle. And to its reality and not its "theory," as Lenin said for example in reproaching Bernstein that he "Denied...*the theory of the class struggle*, on the alleged grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society."[24] The class struggle is not a theory "applicable" to society, it is society itself in its historical intelligibility. Lenin prefers to consider it as a construction of the theoretician which accounts for observed objective facts, somewhat like universal gravitation. It is not the theoretician who proceeds from the class struggle but the reverse. Proceeding from this theory and this position of theory, the theoretician—who is only a politician who has judiciously taken this disguise—can intervene in reality by relating ideological discourses to the masses. As Althusser has seen, the distinction between science and ideology is not merely methodological but corresponds to the actual division between directors and those who carry out their orders. But it is always forgotten that the directors' science is itself ideology—the ideology of their dominance disguised as science. Most important, having located the truth of the class struggle in the theoretician and not in the workers' everyday conflict with exploitation, the Party can be constructed as a separate power. Leninism considers proletarian experience to be nothing or even malignant, understood according to the interest of the proletariat itself. Althusser wants to establish a *coupure épistémologique* between a Marx concerned with experience in itself and thus with false things like alienation, and a scientific Marx constructing his object. This rupture is really that between *material* social being which, as such, is opaque and given by nature, and purely intellectual political consciousness, transparent to itself and comprehending everything. Since science is independent of history as well as the class struggle, *scientific* socialism clearly does not know how to arise from

22. V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, *op.cit.*, p. 94.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

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social *praxis*. And the scholars, the clergy of the dialectic who are determined not by their social position but only by the inherent rigor of their own methodology, possess true proletarian consciousness. They calculate it. But they do not transmit it to the proletariat, and instead give it a consciousness suitable to its realization of historical action conforming to its concept and to prediction. This is why it is unnecessary to demonstrate abstract rigor in the simplifications of a Stalin or a Mao.

It is too easy to criticize Althusser's doctrine, which is to misunderstand its function of justifying these positions of intellectuals and of the Party.[25] The influence of Althusser's doctrine properly remains with what is grossly false (the rule of all ideological success).

Idealism? We are equally concerned with the simplistic materialism which Lenin borrowed from the bourgeoisie, after having borrowed other accessories like the political organization of the factory, the State, and the barracks. Lenin relies on Kautsky: "it was in the minds of certain members of this stratum [bourgeois intelligentsia] that modern socialism originated."[26] The mind secretes thought: sometimes the bourgeois mind secretes socialist thought. The workers certainly do not conceptualize socialism: among them there is only a sort of practical socialism aided by an accessory will, a vague outline of refusal and desire of something else, which is *conceptualized* among the intellectuals which are autonomous or, in any case, depend only on the development of thought. This is strongly in agreement with the "world view" or materialist myth founded on the idea of the *evolution* of matter. Scholars are not engaged in their social being (in Marx's sense, in matter): instead they are *the voice of matter*, of the universal substance which at the beginning of the twentieth century achieved full self-consciousness in the Bolshevik Party. Thus, Althusser can say that Lenin provides *the* philosophy, reserving for himself the mere addition of some superfluous comments.

This is the subordinate status of proletarian experience in Leninism. Even if at first it does not apear trade-unionist, all directly proletarian experience is the sport of the bourgeoisie, as the Party is forced to point out. The spontaneity of the proletariat carries it toward capital. The unhappy do not participate in *the* culture (the hypothesis of a culture which is theirs is a bore for bibliomaniacs), and thus they do not participate in total historical experience. They are estranged from their own history, which fortunately the specialists from the bourgeoisie can teach and explain to them. Intelligibility is possible only through the *separate thought* of which the bourgeois are also the *private proprietors*. And the proletariat cannot consciously represent the objective historical process in which it stands

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25. We fell into this error recently: cf. my "Reading Althusser" in *Telos* 7 (Spring 1971).
26. Karl Kautsky, "Draft Program of the Austrian Social Democratic Party" in *Neue Zeit*, XX, I, no. 3 (1901-02), p. 79, quoted in Lenin, *What is to Be Done?*, *op.cit.*, p. 40.

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against the bourgeoisie: it does not see, like Raymond Aron, that "querulous acceptance" (indeed a frenzy of querulousness) can conceive neither the *essence* nor the *end* of its own struggle. This goes against Marx, it goes against the evidence, but little matter: it has its function. It is the intellectuals, the scholars, and the Party which define the spoken process, the spoken essence, and the spoken end. This is the intellectual method of seizing power: the *coup.*

With the help of Marxism the Party has given its self-knowledge, its truth, and its end to the proletarian movement, which was finding its identity. Thus the Party took over a function which had been the Church's. When there no longer is anything sacred, it can always be reinvented. There must be something hidden where there is power. The prole comprehends nothing because he remains in phenomena and appearances: the profane. The Party knows the substrata of history and its paths.

Work which does not produce knowledge is an abnormal phenomenon linked to the particular conditions of capitalism, in which production must escape from its *real* producers in its process, its essence, and its end. As Marx showed, knowledge escapes from work and concentrates against it with capital. Lenin acknowledges the *fact*, and he acknowledges it in founding a politics which repeats the separation and reproduces the proletariat's situation. Although this is the dominant tendency of capitalism, it is never realized completely: the workers never really become objects. Thus, there exists a workers' knowledge, but it is unrecognized and repressed, and it cannot be communicated through institutional channels.

The function of established knowledge is precisely to exclude all other knowledge: this is the secret of the university. What is essential is that knowledge be separate, and above all that truth be in some way protected and prohibited. Just as the university selects the "best" elements of the working class individually capable of performing bourgeois functions, the Party, following Kautsky's expression which Lenin took over, favors "the most intellectually developed proletarians." And Lenin himself defines this politics of selection: "Look at the Germans: their forces are a hundredfold greater than ours. But they understand perfectly well that really capable agitators, etc., are not often promoted from the ranks of the 'average'. For this reason they immediately try to place every capable working man in conditions that will enable him to develop and apply his abilities to the fullest: he is made a professional agitator; he is encouraged to widen the field of his activity, to spread it from one factory to the whole of the industry, from a single locality to the whole country. He acquires experience and dexterity in his profession; he broadens his outlook and increases his knowledge; he observes at close quarters the prominent political leaders from other localities and of other parties; he strives to rise to their level and combine in himself the knowledge of the working-class environment and the freshness of socialist convictions with professional skill, without which the

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proletariat *cannot* wage a stubborn struggle against its excellently trained enemies."[27]

This politics of selection was rigorously applied by Lenin and Trotsky after 1917 and evidently resulted in the formation of the bureaucracy. Thus, the proletarian, who as such does not count, must be transformed by the apparatus into a specialist of the directorial-revolutionary profession invented by Leninism: an anti-bourgeois profession rigorously *symmetrical* with the bourgeois institution. Leninism does not question the position of knowledge or the monopoly of the means of intellectual production. It must remain the property of those who know, and thus command: of those who command, and thus know. In short, *the head dominates*. It is in the "mind" of intellectuals that socialism "originates." Correlative to the intellectuals' privileges there is in Leninism a traditionally Western obliteration of the body. Leninist materialism is ascetic like the morality which accompanies it. It requires the repression of the sensible world, perceptual truth, and all knowledge constituted at that level: and this repression conforms to the operations of capital. When Leninism is based on the discrediting of the everyday and the immediate, it confirms their alienation by capitalism rather than combatting it.

This relation between the head and the body is also taken over from capitalism: the head is the factory management and the totality is thought: elsewhere only material fragments exist, deprived of unity and meaning. And in capitalism the body as such is the object of a specific alienation: the bourgeois is a head and the body is the body of the proletarian, or the body is proletarian. This body is a pure chunk of matter animated by purely mechanical connections and articulated to the movements of the machine itself. It is executed. Marx speaks of the proletarian's crippled body: dismembered, parcelled out, and reduced to a member of a vaster, nonliving body. Just as the proletarian's knowledge is denied him, the living and sensible uniqueness of his body is negated.

In the nucleus of the Leninist conception of organization is an image of the organism. It translates a relationship of pure hierarchy between head and body, subject and object, and spirit and matter. Only thus can *unification* operate: unifying the proletariat's multiple and divergent movements can only be the task of a central coordinating will, the manifestation of a pure subjectivity. Rosa Luxemburg glimpsed this function of the corporeal schema in the same conception of political organization. After having spoken of the "blind subordination, in the smallest detail, of all party organs, to the party center, which alone thinks, guides, and decides for us all," she said: "We misuse words...when we apply the same term—discipline—to such dissimilar notions as: (1) the absence of thought and will in a body with a thousand automatically moving hands and legs, and (2) the

27. V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, *op.cit.*, pp. 129-130.

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coordination of the conscious, political actions of a body of men."[28] A truly proletarian politics involves a corporeal schema other than Lenin's involving, first of all, respect for the individual body as the union of an existence and a consciousness. Instead of this, we again have the schism: on one side lies everything which is body, in a strictly material sense defined by the bourgeoisie; on the other side everything which is thought, will, and decision.

On the relation between conscious and unconscious, Lenin incessantly reiterates that consciousness can only be brought to the masses from without. The relation of the Party to the class is thus defined as a relation of consciousness to unconsciousness. Stalin expressed it with his usual flair when he argued that Lenin estimated very highly the importance of theory, the element of consciousness, of the Party as a force which directs the spontaneous workers' movement and impregnates it with revolutionary spirit.[29] In Leninist philosophy, i.e., in evolutionary materialism, this relation fundamentally translates the relation of nature to thought: of less-organized to more-organized matter. But these notions of conscious and unconscious go back to psycho-analysis, and thus this relation "of the Party to the class" is situated in the field of transference. We have already encountered this type of relation in the cases of desire (proletarian desire reverts to the Party and its leader) and knowledge (the Party and its leader, as possessor and thus source of knowledge). Here again we find the whole meaning of the Leninist notion of education. Surely, Bolshevik psycho-analysis is not aimed, contrary to Rosa Luxemburg's view, at "extirpating, to the last root, its old habits of obedience and servility." The relation between conscious and unconscious is hypnosis. Here we recognize the problematic of the collective formation mentioned before.

In Leninism this relation is more used than analyzed. The "point of view of consciousness," as we would say today, is particularly privileged. The unconscious obeys, or at least pretends to. Consciousness is constituted as a veritable fortress. Its definition is simple: it is Marxism. But what Marxism? That definition is also simple: it is dogmatic Marxism, a system of knowledge in which the value of consciousness is almost nil, but which in return serves very well as a repressive barrier. And as Rosa Luxemburg said, the *self* of the professional revolutionary can then abandon itself to mirages of omnipotence.

The impotence of the proletariat is the ultimate basis of Leninism. In a word, the proletariat is castrated. This is explicit in Marx, in the Marx one cannot check to see if it is true, for good reasons. Among others this passage from the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* can be cited: "This relationship is that of the worker to his own activity as alien

28. Rosa Luxemburg, *op.cit.*, pp. 118, 119.
29. Joseph Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism* (New York, 1939), p. 109.

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and not belonging to him, activity as passivity, power as weakness, procreation as emasculation."[30] What can it mean to be separated from the means of material and intellectual production and from possession as well? The proletariat is put in a "feminine" position in the Leninist fantasy. Thus, *it must be fertilized* by the Saint-Spirit, i.e., by scientific consciousness. We are incessantly told that this proletariat is lacking and must have something brought to it from without: notably, the instruments of intellectual penetration. But it must also be penetrated by Marxist truth. Kautsky, cited by Lenin, said that socialist consciousness had to be introduced into the proletariat and thus, literally, that it had to be crammed in. Such is the Bolsheviks' mission.

This shows the importance of *means* in Leninism, the point from which we began. The means—the single journal, the Party, and then the State as weapon, etc.—are at a certain level symbols inscribed in the schema underlying Leninism. Some perspicacious observers have seen that according to Leninism the revolution seems to need a strong subjective push which somehow *forces* history. To the extent that they seem sacreligious these theses will be justified. They have the merit of innovating a bit in the repetitive debates on the crucial question of organization. We are content to propose them here in a concentrated form at the risk of being called "Freudo-Mensheviks" by those who, belonging to an institution, can hardly think anything new or true about it, and who do not themselves take the risk of receiving something from without. As Leninism schematizes it, the relation of the Party to the proletariat intervenes in another relation, creating a sort of triangular situation. "Class political consciousness can be brought to the worker *only from without*, that is, only from outside the economic struggle, from outside the sphere of relations between workers and employers."[31] The symmetry between Leninist methods and those of the bourgeoisie can also be explicated from this starting point.

Ultimately, *What Is to Be Done?* is an educational treatise and Lenin is the moral teacher. The working class is the girl to be married, following all the rules of secular but church-going bourgeois society. The girl does show a certain virility, but phenomena are deceptive and must not be counted on. Remember: only the structure is determinant.

Married to Lenin's Bolshevik Party, she was unhappily remarried, according to the Trotskyists, to Stalin.

III. The State (without the Revolution): or Politics and the Imaginary.

Leninism reproduces the political illusion which the bourgeoisie has made the principle of its power. The Leninist theory of the party can easily

30. Loyd Easton and Kurt Guddat, eds., *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society* (Garden City, N.Y., 1967), p. 293.
31. V.I. Lenin, *What Is to Be Done?*, *op.cit.*, pp. 78-79.

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be superimposed on the bourgeois theory of the state. Rousseau, in attempting to explain "the civil order" goes back to the origins of society. Yet, it is not necessary to resort to this notion of origins, and Kant and Hegel adopt the essentials of Rousseau while abandoning his pseudo-historical viewpoint.

According to Rousseau, society rests on a fundamental contract whose unique, exclusive clause is the total alienation of the contractors from themselves. That is to say, the formerly dispersed individuals assemble together and totally alienate themselves from themselves *as members of society*. Society is therefore constituted by the contract to which it is a party. Thus, we have the passage from nature to culture and from violence to the state. At the same time we note the creation of the *citizen* as something essentially different from the empirical individual: he is a member of the collectivity. In a certain sense, he is an effect of the concept. The concept of man, for example, is obviously abstract: only individuals exist. A concept is the synthesis of the heterogeneous, an abstraction from individual differences. But here, in sum, the concept becomes primordial reality, and then divides itself, in existence, into homogeneous parts: men of civil society and citizens.

Yet, society as well as the state and its citizens appear as effects of the image. Although this is clearer in Rousseau's work, it is the basis of all of bourgeois thought: society begins, founds itself on, and exists by a sort of *projection* and reflection. Individuals who hitherto existed only in a state of nature, regroup and make a contract among themselves *as a collectivity*. Although alienated, they face themselves imaginarily in the "social contract" since, apparently, no other partner participates in the contract. In short, society sees itself as a society, and thereby constitutes itself as such. It identifies itself with its own image. Similarly, each individual is led to identify himself with other members who participate in this image. The group of individuals forming an empirical plurality sees itself as a totality. In a word, it is the image of society which constitutes society. It is well known how Jacques Lacan established the connection between the speculative image and the formation of the self. What is involved here is clearly the problem of identification which turns out to be absolutely tied to alienation.

The "social contract" can thus be considered as the collective variant of the "mirror stage." On the one hand, we have reality, i.e., pure plurality, deprived of internal ties, swarming and dusty: the disorder of simple *individuals*. On the other hand, i.e., in the mirror, we have the reflection or the image of the totality, coherence, and of the universal. And here the image projects itself into reality to organize it and to constitute it after its model. Such is the contract: the inorganic collectivity makes a contract with its own image which becomes its direction and brings reality to the image. Each individual, therefore, becomes a result of the division of the social

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whole, of the *Great Individual* or of the *Great Organism*. This theme is a recurrent one in Rousseau. Thus, in *Émile* we read: "Natural man is everything with him: he is a numerical unity, an absolute integer, that bears no relation but to himself or his species. Civilized man is only a relative unit, the numerator of a fraction, that depends on its denominator, and whose value consists in its relation to the integral body of society. The best political institutions are those, which are best calculated to divest mankind of their natural inclinations, to deprive them of an absolute, by giving them a relative, existence, and incorporating distinct individuals in one common whole. A citizen of Rome was neither Caius nor Lucius; he was a Roman; nay, he even loved his country, exclusive of its relation to himself."[32] It is a question of creating a *collective self*. In *The Social Contract*, Rousseau writes: "At once, in place of the individual personality of each contracting party, this act of association creates a moral and collective body, composed of as many members as the assembly contains votes, and receiving from this act its unity, its common identity, its life and its will."[33] *The Social Contract* announces the condition of the possibility of *collective identification*: "The act by which a people is a people,"[34] i.e., whereby it becomes conscious, reflects and identifies itself. In this problematic the imaginary reference to the analogy of the body once again plays a decisive role. One example: "Our political theorists...turn the Sovereign into a fantastic being, composed of several connected pieces, it is as if they were making man out of several bodies, one with eyes, one with arms, another with feet, and each was nothing besides. We are told that the jugglers of Japan dismember a child before the eyes of the spectators; then they throw all the members into the air one after another, and the child falls down alive and whole. The conjuring tricks of our political theorists are very like that; they first dismember the body politic by an illusion worth of a fair, and then join it together again we know not how."[35]

For the individual there is a sort of initiation rite: he dies and is reborn a citizen. His first life is over: Life has been returned to him, but as a life which the state returns to him and whose management and use he concedes to the state. Here, we see most vividly the *division of the individual*. This doesn't prevent the individual as a man, not really dead, from still having an individual will subordinated to the general will, i.e., to the *will which he ought to have*. Thus suspicion reigns and terror is imminent. "He will be forced to be free."[36] Humanism is terror, since it subordinates real existing man to the concept of man. Rousseau's thought, needless to say, inspired

32. J.J. Rousseau, *Emilius and Sophia: or, A New System of Education* (London, 1763), p. 8.
33. J.J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract* (New York, n.d.), p. 11.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

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Robespierre and St. Just. Furthermore, this "collective self" constituted in pure imagination inevitably attainst its reality in a particular subject. The "Sovereign," who for Rousseau is the people constituted as such, becomes necessarily embodied. The *doubly* imaginary relation of the people to its image is sooner or later absorbed into the phantasmagorical individual and in the relation of the head of state to his own image which becomes the norm of collective life. In other words, the real phenomenon is the opposite of the phenomenon affirmed by the ideology, according to which the *self* is transported from the individual to the collectivity.

Marx criticized bourgeois political thought on two grounds. First, he protests against the separation between the living and feeling man, and an allegorical political man: the split between the real and the "true." He compares political alienation to religious alienation. "Only when the actual, individual man has taken back into himself the abstract citizen and in his everyday life, his individual work, and his individual relationships has become a *species-being*, only when he has recognized and organized his own powers as *social* powers so that social force is no longer separated from his as *political* power, only then is human emancipation complete."[37] Moreover, he shows how the political illusion allows the bourgeoisie to conceal the *economic* reality of its power and at the same time the reality of civil society. The political domain is a *mirage*, a representation: it belongs to the imaginary.

What happens with Lenin when Marxism becomes political? The structure of Rousseau's thought remains practically intact. The Sovereign's name becomes simply the Party. Since it contains only the individuals who compose it, this sovereign can have no interest contrary to theirs. Consequently, sovereign power needs no guarantee towards its subjects: it is impossible that the body would want to harm its members. Elaborating the theme of *general will*, Rousseau shows that the subjects obey none but their own will which is simply reflected before them. Similarly, in obeying the Party, the proletariat obeys itself. As Trotsky put it, the Party "personifies" the working class. Speaking about the decision to place a director at the head of the factories (there again we find, as though by chance, the theme of general will or of the collective self that necessarily becomes embodied in a singular will) he writes: "No one imposes this upon the proletariat. It is dictated to the proletariat by its own will." Trotsky ceaselessly revives the old swindle of the "collective will" (which, oddly enough, appears as the very will of the proletariat to deprive itself of all power): "the state and the trade unions...acquire new rights of some kind over the worker. The worker does not merely bargain with the Soviet State: no, he is subordinated to the Soviet State, under its orders in every direction—for it is *his* State."[38] Strictly speaking, this does not bring us back merely to

37. Easton and Guddat, *op.cit.*, p. 241.
38. Trotsky, *Terrorism and Communism*, *op.cit.*, p. 168.

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Rousseau, but to the feudal world and to the serf: was it not *his* Church, *his* lord, *his* king? In brief, it would be easy to recognize the decisive moments of political alienation in Leninism: the constituting image, the imaginary reference to the body, the illusory identification.

Exasperated by the bourgeoisie's bad faith, in 1952 Sartre defended and illustrated the communist institution according to this model.[39] For Sartre, the Party insures the *cohesion* of the working class and the efficacy of its actions. If the working class is separated from the Party, it falls into *dust*: the Party *unifies* the pure reality, the dust of the individuals—it constitutes the *totality*. "It is, in effect, by the *similitude* of persons that [one] wishes to define the class: they play the *same role*, they have the *same relations* with other persons. Is calling them a 'collectivity' enough for them to constitute a class? But this collectivity is either a sum, which takes us back to the species, or it is a *totality*, in which the generative principle would have to be given in the definition itself... If the proletariat is only the inert dregs of industrialization, it will break down into a dust of identical particles."[40]

The Party alone can guarantee unification and, most of all, identification: "All these scholars had promised to show us the unity of a class, and they showed us the identity of the items in a collection." Or again, still on identification: "The simple objective condition of producer defines the concrete man—his needs, his vital problems, the orientation of his thought, the nature of his relationships with others: it does not determine his *belonging to a class*."[41] The model of bodily unity is evoked: "In order to build, if not the unity of a person, at least the unity of an organization or of an enterprise would be necessary." Here we find once again the theme of initiation and transformation: "it is by an internal revolution that one becomes revolutionary; he will become *a different man* only by a sort of transformation. And he cannot have a presentiment of the sudden appearance of another universe and of another *self* as the subject of history so long as he remains crushed on his rock: how could passivity imagine activity? To be a bourgeois is not difficult: it is enough to pick the right parents; afterwards one lets nature take its course. On the other hand, nothing is less easy than being a *proletarian*: one asserts oneself only by a thankless and difficult action, by going beyond fatigue and hunger, by dying to be reborn. In order for action to be possible at any moment, *praxis* must exist within the masses themselves as a call, an example and also, very

39. It is important to keep the date in mind since it would be deceptive to locate in *The Communists and Peace* Sartre's political thought. We need only recall his *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, and its two fundamental notions: the series and the group, which are essential to our argument. Eventually Sartre came to ask the really decisive question: "How can we construct an organization which does not degenerate into an institution?" Yet, it is interesting to re-read *The Communists and Peace* because it describes the reality of Marxist politics much better than anything else.

40. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Communists and Peace* (New York, 1968), p. 93.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 96, emphasis added.

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simply, as a sort of *figuration* of what can be done."[42] In other words, the Party contains the conditions for the effective identity of the proletariat. To reach this identity, the proletariat needs the support of its own institutional image, which is not given to it by society at large. The theme of the speculative image (like that of the function of the body) is evident here, and one needn't wait long for the consequences: "In short, there is needed an organization which is the pure and simple incarnation of *praxis*. The organization reflects and constitutes praxis, it is its formative mirror. Very well, you will say, why not the trade union?... trade union or not, what counts is that, by the very necessity of the situation, the organism which does the conceiving, the executing, the assembling and which distributes the tasks...can be conceived only as an *authority*. It is anything but the delightful product of workers' spontaneity: it imposes itself on each *individual* as an imperative. It is a question of an Order which makes order reign and which gives orders."[43]

"Unity," Sartre continues, "is nothing but the other side of a unifying act:" it is the act by which a *class is a class*. And this act emanates from a pure subject. In Husserlian terminology, it is an act of *Sinngebung*, bestowing a meaning to what cannot normally have one since, according to Sartre, "classes do not naturally exist, but they are made." The founding act of the Party answers the capitalist atomization of the proletariat. A power relation is created and the speculative structure is complicated by the effects of the symmetry. The proletariat has no intrinsic reality: ultimately, by itself, it is the imaginary. It's the Party which *makes it see* its past, its history, its present reality and its perspectives. In the last analysis, the Party is its reality. By a singular inversion, class becomes an effect. This is because there is *no inherent meaning in proletarian existence* and, e.g., the proletariat does not distinguish itself from any other exploited class in history. Thus, it is up to the Party as pure subject to bestow all meaning.

In a sense, the proletariat is an abstract idea. What exists and is visible, tangible and concrete, is what represents itself and is represented; it is the activity of the Party, militants, meetings, newspapers, posters and ballots. Ultimately, there is no proletarian reality: only the representation exists. Consequently, the proletariat finds itself alienated from is own image, which functions as a lure used by a power strong both in its externality as well as in its centralizing character. It acts as the external mediation which alone can call together, assemble, and structure. Similarly, only the Party can make the proletariat into a subject by delegating to it the subjective function which rightly belongs to it and which, in the individual, can be only an effect of the organization. "The worker, transformed by the organization into a moving force, finds his practical reality beginning with

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

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his metamorphosis; whatever he thinks or does, it begins with his *transformation*; and the latter, in its turn, takes place in the actual framework of the Party's policy."[44] Finally, Sartre reproduces exactly Rousseau's formulaton: "In a word, the Party is his freedom."[45]

The relation between Party and class turns out to be of the same type as that between State and nation. How can there be a difference when Sartre writes that "the workers give birth to the class when they all obey the orders of the directors... It is the Party which demands that the masses assemble into a class under its direction." Thus, citizens owe their existence to the State. Socrates had already explained this process, and Bukharin's sacrifice is often interpreted in terms of analogous formulations. The Party produces the *militant* as a part of the whole and the *proletarian* as a fragment of the proletariat. A concept and an image govern reality. The specific difference between that and bourgeois political thought may be in this: the proletariat is already totally alienated by capitalism. Aside from that, Sartre reminds us that, before the institution, individuals had more relations of competition than of solidarity with each other. From our perspective, that may seem like a modification of the Hobbesian theme of the state of nature (war of everyone against everyone else). From a psychological perspective, that may recall the organic disorganization of the first months of life, before the constitution of a bodily schema and of the *self*. Besides, as Marx wrote concerning the bourgeoisie: "Isolated individuals only form a class in as much as they must struggle in common against another class." This is very important. Aggressivity towards one's *like* is correlative to the formation of the self by the mediation of the speculative image (where the self appears as other). Hegel explained at length how a people could be unified only in a war against another people—a fact which Bismarck put into practice at the time of German unity.

A people unified only in war: it is death which generates life. All this takes place under the guise of subsuming the particular under the universal. The Army is made up of one and all, the soldier is anybody: the concrete universal. War abolished the opposition between private and public interest. Unlike Rousseau, but only in appearance, Hegel shows that the people have their unity *only in the other*. We see the consequence of this on the political level: having these schemas imposed upon it by the Party, the confrontation between proletariat and bourgeoisie will take place on the level of symmetry. Thus, Lenin explains how one must endow the proletariat with the same tools as the bourgeoisie.

It is the practical thesis of capitalism that only separated individuals exist. Consequently, capital and the Party come to be defined as separate individuals—although as unifying subjects. The public result of the multiple individual activities on their own level is but a blind projection,

44. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

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which they cannot control: as a result, collective meaning is ascribed to the State which tallies the votes or the Party which decides the strikes. Obviously, these remarks could be linked to the theory of collective formation: the law of the collective always amounts to obedience to the law, in the army as in the church, in the university as in the Party. It is not worth the effort to make a revolution that changes nothing.

We have dealt with Leninism as a block, without distinguishing between virtuous, though unfortunate, Leninism and perverted, but prosperous, Leninism. This concerns essentially Trotskyism: Leninism with an error. The error consists in believing that Stalinism is a perversion and an imposture, whereas it is the result of Lenin and Trotsky himself. In the game of Leninism, the Trotskyists are necessarily the losers. Those who direct the revolution in order not to carry it out are necessarily victorious over those who direct it in order to realize it and whose position turns out to be self-contradictory. At any rate, one does not become a Trotskyist solely for "political" reasons. The theme of the "murder of the father" holds a very special place in Trotskyism. If Trotskyists often appear as resurrected Bolsheviks, it is probably because they retain the idea of the Resurrection of the assassinated father. Yet, it is the Trotskyists who have assumed all the guilt of the communist movement. "Trotskyism" simply means "to be guilty of high treason." It contains something of an historical neurosis.

In present political practice, Trotskyism is reduced to pure Leninism even though the person of Trotsky is not reducible to that of Lenin. Trotsky, who was not a paranoid maniac and did not consider the revolution only in terms of "politics" or of power, attempted to deal with the human totality and the insurmountable truth of his time. But he had to capitulate to the dominating tendency several times. While very young he had denounced the "inhuman" character of scientific socialism. Later, he very lucidly criticized Leninist politics. Finally, he decided to become a dogmatic Marxist and an authoritarian Bolshevik without, however, succeeding in truly integrating himself into the institution. This is what ruined him.

Rosa Luxemburg emphasized the danger of imposing *power hungry intellectual elites* upon a still very young labor movement. But this was not a danger. There is a difference between the longing of the masses to live differently, and the leaders' desires for power. Naturally, it is not a fair fight between those who "only" wish to change the obscure daily misery of this life and those who want to seize power at all costs. Rosa Luxemburg paid very dearly for having loved the revolution instead of rigorously playing the power game: for having preferred its possible content to the simple political process. When various Leninists speak about the seizure of power, presenting it simply as a *means*, one can certainly wonder whether it is not their *end*. Historical experience warrants such a mistrust. The Leninists insist on their total devotion to the cause of humanity which, as such, is enough to demand respect (at least as much as Kant's moral law). But,

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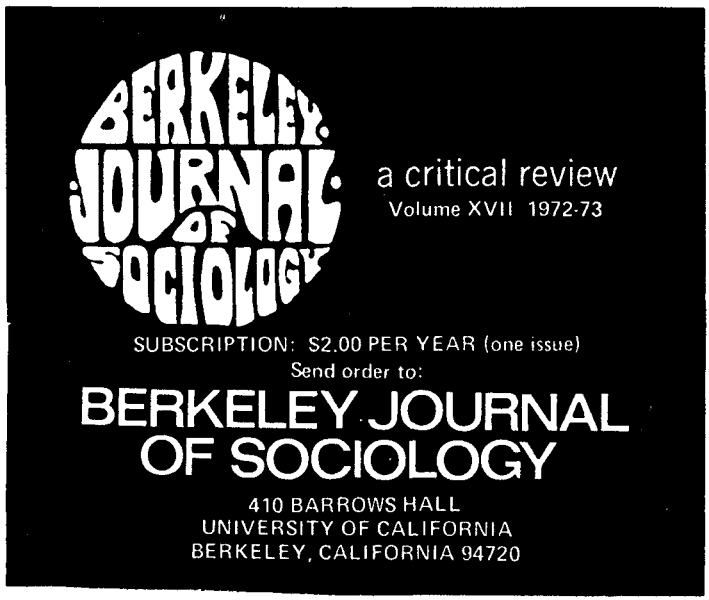
ultimately, who asks them for such a sacrifice? And how can they so willingly identify with objective historical necessity?

In merely changing hands, power hardly changes its nature—especially if what anchors it in society and in the individuals remains unchanged. As in the Hegelian struggle for consciousness, the rule is to show oneself detached from life. In the struggle for power, Leninism (and the bureaucracy which follows it) will not show itself inferior to the bourgeoisie. The sacrifice of desire is also necessary for it. And it is all the more easily accomplished since it is not its own. Thus, one makes the revolution not for some dubious, moral goal like pleasure, but to increase production and to better dominate nature. What or whom this will be useful to, outside of the fact that it permits a new class of exploiters to take over, is not an insoluble question.

Without an historical situation to justify it any longer, Leninism has resuscitated the bourgeois ethic of production. Trotsky explains that work goes against human nature—man being naturally a "lazy animal." Nothing remains but to continue the bourgeois undertaking by adapting it to still half-feudal Russia. Leninism again undertakes this great choice of Western history: it is the second Reformation with its clergy and its entrepreneurs.

All that is well and good, one will say, but what about efficiency? Clearly, power fanatics at the head of a disciplined army possess first-rate efficiency! What else do you propose? This question quite simply forgets that Leninist efficiency is counter-revolutionary, or that in Leninism it hides something else. At any rate, the revolution has changed its basis. Yesterday the Leninists said that "the revolution is lost if we don't organize it." They know today that *they* are lost if they don't organize the revolution.



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Re-reading Luxemburg

by Dick Howard

The question that I want to address here goes beyond the person and activity of Rosa Luxemburg. Through her person and activity, I want to look at a problem that affects our understanding of Marxism, and our own self-perception as theorists who are also revolutionaries: namely, *the relation of theory and practice.* For Rosa Luxemburg[1] this was no problem even in the darkest hour: "Marxist theory gave to the working class of the whole world a compass by which to fix its tactics from hour to hour in its journey toward the one unchanging goal."[2] Today, after the (however temporary) set-backs of the working class in the West, after the excesses, stupidities and crimes committed in the name of Marxism, after the so-called successes of revolution where Marxism least expected them—we can no longer be so sanguine as Rosa Luxemburg. And as theorists, we know too that Marxism itself contains profound ambiguities: we know that there is a latent positivism in the thought of Marx himself, we know how Engels tended to "naturalize" the dialectic, how the Second International assimilated an evolutionary Darwinian element into its doctrine, how the Third International was able to continually change its line to fit national need and convenience while always justifying itself in terms of Marx citations, etc. We have seen Marxism lose its critical thrust and become what Oskar Negt calls a "science of legitimation." And, on the other hand, we have seen those who have attempted to maintain the razor-edge of dialectical criticism fall victim to bourgeois pop culture, practical despair, and insular theorizing.

In this context it is opportune to re-examine the legacy of Rosa Luxemburg. Today her appeal to an heterogeneous group of left-inclined activists and theorists in opposition to the dominant tendencies within the official international Communist movement is understandable, and yet there is something quite paradoxical about it. There is of course the critique of revisionism and opportunism in theory and in practice, the stress on spontaneity and self-formation of consciousness, the early recognition of Kautskyian dogmatism and of the increasing bureaucratization of the SPD, the shrill outcry against the Social Chauvinism of the national parties and the recognition of the role of imperialist capitalism as forcing an internationalist and anti-war strategy on the world proletariat, the avid

1. All quotes from Luxemburg are from the English translation in *Selected Political Writings of Rosa Luxemburg*, edited by Dick Howard (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971). All future references will give the title of the essay and page number.
2. "The Junius Pamphlet," p. 325.

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defense of the councils form as the crucial element in the coming revolution; and, to be sure, there is the critique of Lenin's views on the party. All of these, interpreted in one or another manner, give more than enough grounds for adopting the label of Luxemburg. —And yet, there is another side. Luxemburg was a dogmatist. For example, she is satisfied that she has refuted Bernstein when she "shows that, in its essence, in its bases, opportunist practice is irreconciliable with Marxism."[3] She accepts Marxism as "the specific mode of thought of the rising class conscious proletariat,"[4] and never doubts its truth despite the series of defeats which she, and the proletariat, suffered. Or, to give another example, she was a "legalist" when it came to construing Party or International decisions, advocating expulsions, justifying her position on the mass strike in terms of "the true essence of the Jena resolution...," and, on the International scene, proposing the reconstruction of an International which would have a control over the national parties not essentially different from what came to pass with the construction of the Third International. Or, concerning her position with regard to Leninism, one must recall not only the "non-democratic" manner in which she functioned in the party, but also, within her critique of Lenin, the option for a control from the top within the *German* party, to whom the Lenin-critique was actually addressed.

Here, I want to look at the two sides of Luxemburg's activity in order to delineate and explicate their logic. My concern is to bring out Luxemburg's attitude, as theorist, to the ongoing struggles of the class and the different forms that they took. To make her position clear, it will be necessary to make reference to Marx's work. I will then look at the implications of Luxemburg's practice as theoretician and revolutionary, in order to show the problems and paradoxes which the theoretician-as-revolutionary must confront and to draw some conclusions with reference to theory itself. What is it about a theory that makes it revolutionary?

Marxian theory has always had a somewhat ambiguous relation to revolutionary practice. Marxism claims to be the theory of the working class. This notion, however, can be interpreted in two senses, whose consequences are radically different. On the one hand, it can mean that Marxism is the working class's theory: that it is the theory which the working class adopts, accepts, and uses as a guide to its action. On the other hand, it can mean that Marxism is the expression in theory of the actual practice of the working class; it means that practice implicitly contains its own theory, which is expressed in Marxism in such a way that the class can recognize itself in the theory, understand what it in fact is doing *as a class*, and draw the implications of that activity. The distinction,

3. "Social Reform or Revolution?" p. 130.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

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in other words, is that between a theory *for* practice and a theory *of* practice.

The distinction between the two interpretations is often blurred. Gramsci, who tends to be a representative of the latter tendency, nonetheless speaks of the need for Marxism as an ideology to help the proletariat maintain its faith in the struggle at those times when the revolutionary tide is out. Lenin, who tends to be a representative of the former tendency, achieves his greatest moments precisely when he breaks with the received doctrine and opens new paths based on his empathetic understanding of the masses and their capacities at a given moment. Indeed, there is an ambiguity in the work of Marx himself. *Capital* is an attempt to integrate a rigorously scientific or deductive model with a theory of the class struggle as the basis of the various forms taken by the capitalist production process. We see the first of these, for example, in the discussion of the move from cooperation, division of labor and manufacturing, to machinery and modern industry; or in the "law" of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. But in both cases, the second aspect immediately intervenes, in the first case when Marx's discussion points to the role of capitalist reaction to working class struggle as leading to the introduction of new methods of relative surplus-value; and in the second, when the chapter on countervailing tendencies points to the level of the class struggle as a central variable of the rate of profit. The same ambiguity runs through many of Marx's conjunctural political analyses. For example, the Paris Commune is first condemned on theoretical grounds, then enthusiastically accepted and integrated into the theoretical conception of the nature of proletarian revolution, and then once again brutally criticized, on theoretical grounds, in some of the later letters.

This Marxian ambiguity appears in Rosa Luxemburg's practice as a revolutionary theoretician. Mention has already been made of her belief that revisionism could be refuted once its incompatibility with Marxian theory had been shown. She could of course claim efficacy for this approach insofar as, within the dualistic confines of the Erfurt Program, her opponents insisted that their position was compatible with Marxism. But the notion of a theory *for* practice enters at a second, theoretically more interesting, level in her discussion of the dialectic of the "final goal." This needs to be looked at in some detail, before going on to see how the element of the theory *of* practice figures in her work.

In "Social Reform or Revolution?" we read statements like these: "It is the final goal alone that constitutes the spirit and content of our socialist struggle, which turns it into a class struggle."[5] "The final goal of socialism is the only decisive factor distinguishing the Social Democratic movement from bourgeois democracy and bourgeois radicalism, the only factor transforming the entire labor movement from a vain attempt to repair the

5. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

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capitalist order into a class struggle *against* this order..."[6] How are we to interpret these responses? On a first level, they are of course replies to the political implications of Bernstein's famous assertion that "the movement is everything, the final goal is nothing." A somewhat more lengthy assertion in the same text, however, goes further: "The secret of Marx's theory of value, of his analysis of money, his theory of capital, his theory of the rate of profit, and consequently of the whole existing economic system is—the transitory nature of the capitalist economy, its collapse, thus—and this is only another aspect of the same phenomenon—the final goal, socialism. And precisely because, *a priori*, Marx looked at capitalism from the socialist's viewpoint...he was enabled to decipher the hieroglyphics of capitalist economy."[7] What worries Rosa Luxemburg, as *revolutionary* theorist, in the Bernsteinian position is its *empiricism*. In effect, for the empiricist the facts are precisely what is out there, before my eyes, in all their gross ugly reality. The empiricist with a heart—i.e., the humanist—confronted with this reality desires to smooth the rough edges, efface the ugliness, make peace. The empiricist standpoint is that of the vulgar economist, the Benthamite continually attacked by Marx as having the mentality of the small shop-keeper who can only see things from the individual point of view, never that of the class or social totality. The essential connectedness of things is lost to the empiricist, for whom all relatedness is accidental and external. The political result of empiricism is that strikes, electoral action, demonstrations, etc. are not in themselves revolutionary; they are either a moral reaction to evil or a defensive reaction to oppression, which the "socialist" politician can use as means or pawns in the political game. But if there is no essential connection among the various activities undertaken by the working class, then a fundamental insight of Marx is lost—namely, that capital and labor form a conflictual pair such that each affects and depends on the other. Luxemburg's point here, as Lukács correctly perceived, is that there is no such thing as a "fact." The "facts" only make sense in their interrelatedness, in their totality—in this case, in the context of the inherently contradictory and doomed capitalist system; hence, in the context of the ongoing revolution.

While agreeing with Luxemburg's political and epistemological critique of empiricism and its consequences, we are somewhat taken aback by her use of the term "*a priori*" when referring to Marx's theoretical standpoint in *Capital*. Is it really an *a priori*? If so, the argument takes on an ideological character. What meaning must I give to the facts in order that they fit into the theoretical and practical structures that I want to develop? The theory becomes a theory *for* practice, no longer a theory *of* it. That is, if as Luxemburg suggests, what differentiates socialism from bourgeois democracy and bourgeois radicalism is nothing but this *a priori* belief in the

6. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

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final goal, then one is at a loss to explain the patient and detailed research of Marx writing *Capital*; *Capital* becomes a construction! If Marxism starts from the assumption of the necessity of revolution, then it is a viciously circular theory, not totally unlike Christian doctrines of "original sin."

Rosa Luxemburg has unconsciously pointed to an ambiguity in Marx himself. In the Marxian philosophy of history there often appears a latent neo-enlightenment belief in the eternal progressiveness of history as it moves towards a final reconciliation. Whether latent or actual, this tendency was theorized by the Second International. To a degree, their argument makes sense. If we recognize the vanity of a hyper-empiricism, we ask ourselves how we are to make sense of the present. Certainly, the present is historical; but that simply implies variation. Something more is necessary: a directionality, a positive goal, an end to (pre-) history. If, then, history has a direction, all those stages which have not yet reached the "end" are imbued with a kind of negative valence; and a dialectic ensues between the present-as-not-yet-future, and the future-to-which-the-present-tends. In a present pregnant with the future, we can avoid the parallel errors of opportunism-revisionism and ethical utopianism.

Luxemburg's practical experience of the day-to-day political struggles served to insulate her against the abstractions of theory. She refers to "two reefs" between which the proletariat must chart its course: "abandonment of the mass character or abandonment of the final goal; the fall back to sectarianism or the fall into bourgeois reformism; anarchism or opportunism."[8] The same approach occurs repeatedly in her work; the theorist as revolutionary seems to have the task, as theorist, of maintaining at all times the tension between the present and the possible future, avoiding the temptations of the immediate as well as the dreams of a Beyond, leaning now to one side then to the other in order to maintain that *difference* which is the space within which the movement can develop.[9] In her analysis of the Polish *Proletariat* Party—a model of Marxian historical analysis—she writes that what "separates the Social Democratic position from those of other movements is...its conception of the relationship between the immediate tasks of socialism and its final goals."[10] She then presents a detailed analysis of the programmatic statements of the Party, comparing them with the Blanquist attitude of *Narodnaya Volya*, and with the programmatic sections of the *Communist Manifesto*. Her conclusion is that "The ABC's of socialism teach that the socialist order is not some sort of poetic ideal society thought out in advance, which may be reached by

8. "Militia and Militarism," p. 142. "Organizational Questions of Russian Social Democracy," p. 304.

9. One need only refer to the brilliant critiques of the Blanquist temptation—in "In Memory of the Proletariat Party," in the "Mass Strike" essay, or in "Our Program and the Political Situation"—and the concomitant stress on the nature and role of the *transitional program* to see how she avoids the temptation of reifying the historical process.

10. "In Memory of the Proletariat Party," p. 179.

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various paths in various more or less imaginative ways. Rather, socialism is simply the historical tendency of the class struggle of the proletariat in the capitalist society against the class rule of the bourgeoisie."[11] It is the developing struggle and the tension created by the oppisition of classes, not a poetic, ethical or technological necessity, that makes socialism appear as the *sense* of the actual class activity of the proletariat.[12]

History is the history of the class struggle; and certainly before August 4, 1914, Luxemburg never doubted that that class struggle would end as Marx had predicted. But the immediate tasks of practical politics had to be dealt with; and Luxemburg's manner of dealing with them is innovative and rich with lessons. Faithful to Marx, she asserts that: "Man does not make history of his own volition. But he makes it nonetheless. In its action the proletariat is dependent upon the given degree of ripeness of social development. But social development does not take place apart from the proletariat. The proletariat is its driving force and its cause as well as its product and its effect. The action of the proletariat is itself a co-determining part of history."[13] The upshot of this is fundamental not only for the theory of history—which must lose any character of pre-determined necessity, lose its external and mechanistic character, and become that experience of choice and creation that we live daily—but also for political practice. It means that *class consciousness* becomes the central focus and locus of revolutionary activity.

Luxemburg notes a fundamental paradox in the class struggle. She sees the "proletarian army is first recruited in the struggle itself," but yet that "only in the struggle does it become aware of the objectives of the struggle."[14] This "dialectical contradiction" cannot be resolved *via* the Leninist-Kautskyian class-consciousness from the outside approach. That is a technology; it supposes a knowledge of a pre-determined historical necessity to be taught by the knowledgeable to the unknowing, and preserves the relations of subordination. Luxemburg insists that "the masses can only form this [revolutionary] will in a constant struggle against the existing order, only within its framework."[15] Concretely, this means that "the solution to this apparent paradox lies in the dialectical process of the class struggle of the proletariat fighting for democratic conditions in the state and at the same time organizing itself and gaining class consciousness.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 201.
12. Comparison with Hegel, and with Marx, is interesting here. Hegel insists that "the subject matter is not exhausted in its *goal*, but in its *being carried out*; nor is the *result* the *actual* whole, but rather the result along with its becoming." (Preface to *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1952, p. 11.) Marx's political translation of this, in the *Communist Manifesto*, is that "in the various phases of evolution through which the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie passes," the communists must "always advocate the interests of the movement as a whole."
13. "The Junius Pamphlet," p. 333.
14. "Organizational Questions of Russian Social Democracy," p. 289.
15. "Social Reform or Revolution?" p. 131.

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Because it gains this class consciousness and organizes itself in the course of the struggle, it achieves a democratization of the bourgeois state and, in the measure that it itself ripens, makes the bourgeois state ripe for a socialist revolution."[16] It must be stressed that this is not simply a psychological process, a kind of additive learning by the accumulation of bits of experience; the position only makes sense when we recognize that the conditions in which the proletariat begins the struggle are conditions of which it is the co-creator, and each new phase of the struggle forces new conditions which modify the proletariat objectively as well as subjectively. Thus, despite all her work in economics and her rigid insistence on the centrality of the break-down theory, when it comes to practical politics and its theory, Luxemburg insists—vehemently in the *Anti-Kritik*, for example[17]—that economics alone will not bring socialism. History is richer, more complex and more human than that.

As a theorist *of* the class struggle, for whom the development of revolutionary class consciousness becomes the central variable, Luxemburg implicitly throws into question any dogmatism of the "final goal," and with it any linear view of the evolution from capitalism to socialism. The following citation from the "Mass Strike" essay is a description *of* the practice of the Russian proletariat: "Each new rising and new victory of the political struggle simultaneously changes itself into a powerful impetus for the economic struggle by expanding the external possibilities of the latter, increasing the inner drive of the workers to better their situation and increasing their desire to struggle. After every foaming wave of political action a fructifying deposit remains behind from which a thousand stalks of economic struggle shoot forth. And vice-versa. The ceaseless state of economic war of the workers with capital keeps alive the fighting energy at every political pause. It forms, so to speak, the ever fresh reservoir of the strength of the proletarian class, out of which the political struggle continually renews its strength. And, at the same time, it at all times leads the untiring economic boring action of the proletariat, now here, now there, to individual sharp conflicts out of which, unexpectedly, political conflicts on a large scale explode. In a word: the economic struggle is that which leads the political struggle from one nodal point to another; the political struggle is that which periodically fertilizes the soil for the economic struggle. Cause and effect here continually change places...And *their unity* is precisely the mass strike."[18] The mass strike, which is a class action taking place over time, alters the very conditions which engendered it, at the same time that the new conditions which it created bring it forth again in a different form. The economic continues and develops the political and the political does the same for the economic; and both affect and are

16. "In Memory of the Proletariat Party," pp. 180-181.
17. See especially pp. 36-37, and p. 117 of the original edition of the *Anti-Kritik*.
18. "Mass Strike, Party and Trade Unions," p. 241.

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affected by the drives and desires of the proletariat. It is interesting that nowhere in the "Mass Strike" essay does Rosa Luxemburg present an "economic" analysis in the strict sense of the term; nowhere does she talk, for example, of the role of French capital, of the unequal regional development, or of the class composition of the Russian state. In effect, she shows the inner connection of a series of economic and political struggles over a period of nearly a decade; yet she gives no "cause" and shows no external "necessity" for this development, and repeatedly insists that the "mass strike cannot be propagated." Indeed, if "Marxism" is taken to be a theory which explains capitalist society on the basis of its contradictory economic infrastructure which necessarily engenders crisis and revolution, —and this is, at least in part, the interpretation Luxemburg gives in "Social Reform or Revolution?"—then it is questionable how "Marxist" Luxemburg's mass strike theory is.

The mass strike theory is the theorization *of* proletarian practice. The interplay of the economic and political struggles that Luxemburg theorizes makes sense only when we realize that both aspects of the struggle are the *results* of proletarian practice. In effect, the proletariat has seized the role of social subjectivity; and the Other which it confronts is not some eternally fixed form—"capital," the "bourgeoisie," the "state," or what-have-you —but rather is the result and incarnation of its own previous action. Instead of passively undergoing the capitalist accumulation process, the proletariat has affirmed its creative class possibilities. When Luxemburg talks of the mass strike as the "unity" of the political and economic struggles, we have to understand this unification as depending not on some sort of "objective" factors, but as incarnated in the practice of the active class subject. The mass strike is the *sense* of the movement of *differentiation* between the political and the economic.

Luxemburg's activity during the 1918-19 revolution in Germany reinforces this interpretation. Her position—outvoted at the founding Congress of the KPD (Spartakus)—was based on the recognition that abstract theorization based on models of "what ought to be" is useless, and that the theorist must confront the actual practice of the movement, theorizing it in order to show its strengths and weaknesses, possibilities and limits. The positions of the ultra-left, which carried the Congress, made her nuanced analysis of the next tasks of the revolution appear moderate and unappreciative of the tempo inaugurated by 1917; indeed, her speech was greeted, the stenographic minutes report, by "weak applause." The opposition to Luxemburg's analysis was based partly on the impact of the Russian success, and the lessons that the German revolutionaries thought they could draw from what they knew of Leninism. Luxemburg had already replied to this sort of criticism, pointing out that the Leninist view of the party won't bring socialism because "it is not based on the immediate class

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consciousness of the working masses."[19] Rather, it transforms even the members of the revolutionary group "into pure implements of a predetermined will lying outside their own field of activity—into tools of a central committee."[20] It makes the "mass of comrades" into "a mass incapable of judging, whose essential virtue becomes 'discipline,' that is, obedience to duty."[21] While these criticisms of Leninism are certainly valid in the abstract, it is important to recognize that Luxemburg's argument is based in the specific conception of socialism as a process and that each specific situation demands a concrete analysis whose task is to reveal its possibilities and its limits.

In the analysis of "Our Program and the Political Situation," Luxemburg stresses the difference between bourgeois and socialist revolutions: in the former, "it sufficed to overthrow that official power at the center and to replace a dozen or so persons in authority," whereas "we have to work from beneath and this corresponds to the mass character of our revolution."[22] What had taken place on November 9 was, in this sense, a bourgeois revolution, despite its formal incarnation in the workers' and soldiers' Councils. "It was characteristic of the first period of the revolution...that the revolution remained exclusively political. We must be fully conscious of this. This explains the uncertain character, the inadequacy, the half-heartedness, the aimlessness of this revolution.... It then becomes an economic revolution, and therewith a socialist revolution. The struggle for socialism has to be fought out by the masses, by the masses alone, breast to breast against capitalism, in every factory, by every proletarian against his employer. Only then will it be a socialist revolution."[23] The limits of the situation were clearly unripeness of the masses; the possibilities were those created by the very action of the masses, action which had changed the meaning and reality of their situation, and changed them as well. The dialectic of praxis and its sedimentations that she had pointed to in analyzing the mass strike would have to play its role here. She proposed participation in the vote for a National Assembly, agreeing with Paul Levi's speech which asserted this as a prime task while admitting that of course it would not "make" the revolution. Against the activism of the ultra-left—typified by Gelwitzki's "Ten men on the street are worth more than a thousand votes"—she spoke of a "long revolution," of the proletariat's maturation process through a series of struggles, and she criticized the gross alternative of "guns or parliament," by demanding a "more refined, dialectical choice."

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19. "Organizational Questions of Russian Social Democracy," p. 288.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
22. "Our Program and the Political Situation," p. 407.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 396.

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Luxemburg's position did not carry the Congress; and two weeks later, she and Liebknecht were dead, in the ruins of the revolution. Her last article, "Order Reigns in Berlin," proposes again a theorization *of* the struggle; no recipes for future success, but only possibilities and limits are proposed. The limits were partly conjunctural—the need to combat the Ebert-Scheidemann-Noske regime—but mainly concerned the limited development of class consciousness. The possibilities are shown by the spontaneous creativity of the Berlin masses, "the people's instinctive recognition that...the counter-revolution would not rest with the defeat it had suffered, but rather would be bent on a general test of strength." She insists on the fact "that from the very beginning the moral victory was on the side of the 'street'."[24] The stress on the moral character of the struggle, on the possibility that the people recognize that they themselves must take charge of their own liberation, and on the historical character of that struggle as creating meaning and opening possibilities in the present—this strain runs throughout Luxemburg's life. Socialism remains for her an objective necessity; yet in the crucial theoretical moments, in the theorization of revolutionary practice, it was the conscious, subjective, moral element that came to the fore. Reflecting on the defeat of 1919, she wrote: "The leadership failed. But the leadership can and must be created anew by the masses and out of the masses. The masses are the crucial factor; they are the rock on which the ultimate victory of the revolution will be built. The masses were up to the task. They fashioned this 'defeat' into a part of those historical defeats which constitute the pride and power of international socialism. And that is why this 'defeat' is the seed of the future triumph."[25] Here as throughout, the theorist gives no recipes and offers no tactics; she strives to understand, to express and to crystallize the sense of the actual struggles. Yet she is the same theorist who taught economics at the Party School, who wrote *The Accumulation of Capital*; the same person who on countless occasions analyzed the international politico-economic conjuncture in a variety of widely-read party newspapers and journals; and she is the self-professed orthodox Marxist, defender of the Theory against internal critiques as well as against bourgeois attempts to weaken it through expropriation. How do both sides of this picture hold together?

Her motto "only the working class, through its own activity, can make the word flesh" is not untypical. On the one hand, there is the ethical phraseology coupled with the stress on autonomous self-activity of the proletariat. On the other hand, there is that enigmatic "word," which seems to be pre-given and foreordained. If the Word is already present and awaiting only History for its realization, there is present here the danger of the theory *for* practice and the seeds of dogmatism. If, however, we

24. "Order Reigns in Berlin," p. 412.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 415.

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understand with Luxemburg the revolution as a process, as the totality and sense of the struggle signified by the Mass Strike and based ultimately on the dialectic of class consciousness and its objective sedimentations, then the Word takes on the sense of an open self-creation. Then we can avoid the danger of technological recipes for revolution, and describe our task with Rosa Luxemburg: "The essence of socialist society consists in the fact that the great laboring mass ceases to be a dominated mass, but rather, makes the entire political and economic life its own life and gives that life a conscious, free and autonomous direction."[26] The Word is not that of the theorist, but that of practice. What then is the role and task of the theorist?

Rosa Luxemburg was a party-person. One recalls her angry letter to Henriette Roland-Holst concerning the decision of the left of the Dutch Social Democracy to split from the turgidly opportunistic Center and form a new, truly left, party. Even if they were theoretically correct, she argued, separation from the "party of the working class," however corrupted it may be, is suicide. A split would be a separation from the life-blood of socialism; it would be to privilege purity at the cost of participation in the inevitable revolution. The (Hegelian) Beautiful Soul, entrenched in its purity at the cost of being unable to put that purity into practice, is not Marxist. More important than any question of efficacy—though the fate of the Dutch Left, and countless other pure doctrines is certainly instructive—is the basic notion of revolutionary theory as a theory *of* practice, whose implications are that if one separates oneself from the masses, then one's theory will become an ideology, become sterile and be unable to evolve with the evolution of the mass struggle itself. In however corrupted a form, the Party represents that focus wherein the forms of struggle find their expression, their reflection, and from which they are reflected back to the masses who can thus become conscious of the wealth of possibilities implied in their own actions.

There is an ambiguity in this view of the party which, as we shall see, corresponds to an ambiguity in the role of theory itself as well as to an ambiguity in the theorist's own social insertion. On a factual level, we know that Rosa Luxemburg's activity within the party did not correspond to her view of its function; and we know that, after serious doubts and hesitations, she left the SPD to join the newly formed Communist Party of Germany (Spartacus). We can offer conjunctural explanations for both of these activities; and this is sufficient for the present purposes. What is more striking for us is that she insists that the Party is necessary, but *not* as a tactical tool for the seizure of power! This is clear in her critique of the Leninist technology of revolution, and in her analysis of the German revolution of 1918-19. In the latter, she points to the political onset of the revolution, shows its insufficiency, and insists that the next stage must be

26. "What does the Spartakus League Want?" p. 368.

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the economic combat in which, "breast to breast," each proletarian becomes aware of his/her task, becomes conscious of the situation and its demands. Decrees, the seizure of central power, programmatic statements are not enough. "The masses must learn to use power by using power."[27] It seems, in effect, that the Party's task is precisely *to avoid the temptation of seizing power*, the political temptation; it must, as she puts it in the "Mass Strike" essay: "give the slogans, the direction of the struggle:...organize the *tactics* of the political struggle in such a way that in every phase and in every moment of the struggle the whole sum of the available and already released active power of the proletariat will be realized and find expression in the battle-stance of the party;...see that the resoluteness and the acuteness of the tactics of Social Democracy never fall below the level of the actual relation of forces but rather rise above it."[28] The Party, in other words, depends on the level of struggle of the masses for the formulation of tactics; *and* at the same time, the Party must "rise above" the actual level of struggle. How can it do both? This is the question of Theory, and the challenge for the radical theorist.

The same problem is posed somewhat differently in the final section of the same essay. Discussing the relation Party-Trade Unions, Luxemburg insists that it is the Party which is responsible for the growth of the Unions insofar as the Party, by spreading what we must call the "ideology" of Social Democracy, sensibilizes the masses to their situation. She rejects the Trade Unionists' argument that numerical strength indicates that they and their ideology of compromise should dominate the movement. The movement is more than its organizational forms, and the Party, as the "spirit" of the movement, transcends its organized mass, and is more than just its organized kernal centered in offices and official functions. But, if this is the case, one has to ask why Rosa Luxemburg put so much stress on the "legislative" function of the Party Congress, as if she expected this yearly "assembly of buddhists and bonzes" to create correct tactics that all must follow. The only explanation seems to be that she saw the Party and its decisions as not simply representing (i.e., theorizing) ongoing practice, but also as guiding it, as pushing it forward, giving it a sense of mission and totality. This, however, is an ideological function!

This ambiguous attitude runs throughout the activity of Rosa Luxemburg. Look at the apparent contradictions on nearly every major issue: On the one hand, she insists that parliamentary and trade union struggles are not the way to socialist revolution, showing their one-sided defensive character rooted within the game-rules of the capitalist system; on the other hand, she argues that without parliamentary democracy and without free trade unions and their struggles, a socialist revolution would

27. "Our Program and the Political Situation," p. 406.
28. "Mass Strike, Party and Trade Unions," p. 247.

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not be possible for there would be no political room for the proletariat to develop its consciousness and no economic space to free itself from the immediate pressure of the struggle for existence within a society of wage slavery. She argues that bourgeois democracy is an empty hull, a formality which veils the class domination of the bourgeoisie; but insists that without this formality there would be no possibility for the proletariat to organize and recognize itself as a class; and moreover, she attempts to demonstate that in the age of imperialism the only party which must objectively support democracy is that of the proletariat. She insists repeatedly and vigorously that without the economic necessity of the breakdown of capitalism there are no objective grounds for the socialist revolution; but argues just as emphatically that it is only the class conscious proletariat which, by its own efforts and through its own self-educative experience, can make the system tumble. In her last political struggle, she opposed a hyper-activist politics in favor of a "long revolution" based on electoral as well as economic struggles; yet she supported the majority decision, laying down her life in the premature revolution that followed, and justifying this not as a "mistake" but as a necessary stage in the historical development of the proletariat.

In each of these decisions the first pole of the opposition seems to represent a theoretical position based on the ideology of Marxism and valid for capitalism in general; while the counter-position, which she actually adopted in the fire of action, is a modification of that theory based on what is in fact its basis: i.e., based on the action of the proletariat as inflecting the social-political configuration that is capitalism. The orthodox Marxist that she was is responsible for both poles: the ideology itself must be defended against the opportunistic incursions of those too short-sighted to see the basic necessities to which the fundamental contradiction capital/labor points; and at the same time, the revolutionary kernal of the theory—that class consciousness, achieved in the struggle within the existing order, is the *sine qua non* of its elimination—must be maintained open. The revolutionary Marxist theorist, in other words, is *both a conservative and a visionary*. Both must be maintained, for the theory without vision becomes a dead weight on the practice of which it was once the expression—i.e., becomes an ideology; and vision without analytic content becomes a utopian and baseless wish, a groundless existential activism—which is also an ideology.

The practice of Rosa Luxemburg as theorist is a remarkable attempt to maintain both poles of this dialectic of revolutionary theory. For example, in the debate with Bernstein, her defense of economic orthodoxy suddenly gives way when confronted with Bernstein's challenge: What if, suddenly, the power fell into the hands of the proletariat? Her reply is that "the idea of a 'premature' conquest of political power... [is] a political absurdity, derived from a mechanical conception of social development, and positing

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for the victory of the class struggle a *time* fixed *outside* and *independent of* the class struggle."[29] That is, Bernstein's question supposes an ideological view of a History unrolling independent of precisely the forces that make it; it supposes that the theorist is in a position external to the class struggle, able to see the totality of history and its necessities *from outside*. Yet, immediately following this defense of a theoretical position situated within and partaking of the class struggle, she returns to the defense of economic orthodoxy, maintaining the necessity of the breakdown theory in purely economic (i.e., external) terms. The point is that the two go together, that neither alone is sufficient and that each influences the other. If one looks at her speech, "Our Program and the Political Situation," one is first of all struck by the fact that she felt the need to introduce a resolution against the counter-revolutionary activities of the SPD government with regard to the Russian situation, and the care with which she documents these interventions. This care for socialist legalism is transferred to the plane of actual considerations with the return to the Erfurt Program, which she attempts to interpret in the spirit of the ongoing revolutionary activity, with the manifest aim of linking the activities of the new Party to the tradition of Marxism. At the same time, however, one sees the visionary side in the stress on, and recognition of, the new creative form taken on by the mass activity: the workers' and soldiers' councils. Both poles are there, as always.

Yet, what is striking in the practical activity of this revolutionary theorist is that *she was a failure*. On *every* central issue—from the revisionist-opportunist debates, through the mass strike, the question of militarism and imperialism, the attitude to adopt towards the War, the tactics to be followed by the KPD in 1918-19—she was refuted. She was refuted on other issues as well—the parliamentary tactic to be followed, the nature and function of the Party, the role of the trade unions, the status of the International. What is important in these refutations is that she was never beaten by other arguments, but rather refuted by the facts, the events; *refuted by History*. For a Marxist, this is of course the most damning refutation of all!

There is a further peculiarity in Rosa Luxemburg's practice as a theorist. *She was a dogmatist*. She never put Marxism into question, never doubted its teachings for a moment. We have seen that hers was a creative Marxism, following the spirit and not the letter, open to new developments as a theory *of* practice must be. Yet the result of this was only that she was *a dogmatist eternally in opposition*. This is paradoxical; for if we are correct in asserting that she captured the spirit of the movement in her theory, then the practice of the revolutionary theorist, and the revolutionary theory itself, is cast into doubt.

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29. "Social Reform or Revolution?" p. 123.

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There are many possible explanations of Luxemburg's practice as a theorist, and its destiny. None is in itself convincing, for each is obliged to introduce external and contingent factors. It might be suggested that the assertion of Luxemburg's "failure" is a kind of pragmatic judgment itself situated outside of the history in which her work was forged. It would seem that the verdict "failure" was arrived at by superimposing her theory and her practice on an ever-flowing History which was the material base on which her work functioned. This would give her theory and her practice a closed, positive, and ultimately ideological character, instead of presenting it as an open, interrogative theory *of* practice. In order to clarify this problem, we have to look at the ambiguities of revolutionary theory by returning to the original question: how is it possible for the theory to be a theory *of* the actual practice of the proletariat, and at the same time to *rise above* that practice?

The essential variable in the theoretical and practical work of Rosa Luxemburg is class consciousness. It is no doubt for this reason that today, when capitalism has revealed itself as a total system seemingly capable of absorbing its economic, social and political contradictions, we find her work a congenial source of reflection on our own problems. In a way, this is ironic; for she was too orthodox, too dogmatic and too much an optimist to have sensed the problems posed by the advent of a scientized, bureaucratic capitalism as we know it. Nowhere in her work does one find a concern with the mechanisms of individual or mass psychology, or a discussion of problems like reification, alienation or false consciousness. Yet she has been, and is, a source of fruitful reflection on just these problems.

In asserting that class consciousness is the essential component, the *sine qua non* of any revolutionary movement, Luxemburg is certainly no different than any other Marxist. What is distinctive is her analysis of it—or better, the fact that she never makes it into the *object* of her theorizing, but rather shows its actual appearance as the reflection and critical self-reflection of the open possibilities that proletarian action has created. This central "ingredient" is never thematized, always present on the margins, emerging and taking form only to be carried onward and reappear in a different guise; it is not a thing but the *sense* and *meaning*, the *unity* and *totality* of the class struggle. It is not external, the product of a theory or the property of the Party; it is the condition of the possibility of the struggle and the product of that same struggle. We can fix the elements that play a role in determining the present status of class consciousness, talking about the material conditions which determine the forms of consciousness. But this cannot be understood as a cause-effect relation empirically determined. We know, for example, that the same conditions can give rise to very different forms of consciousness and activity; and we know that the inflationary wave we are presently living is given a different human, lived significance than what appears in the official statistics. What

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is crucial is that the material conditions can only affect the class precisely insofar as the class itself is willing to be affected, i.e., gives a significance to these conditions.

As we read through Luxemburg's articles analyzing the events of her time, and as we vicariously follow her course on political economy at the Party School, what gives her work a character that is more than just good analysis and correct interpretation is her ability to continually put her finger on the dynamic, the possibilities, the sense and radical signification, the openness of the situation she is describing. Of course, much of what she "predicted" did not come to pass. But this "failure" cannot be judged from the transcendent standpoint of History that has now closed off the possibilities and shown an erroneous judgment. Her task was not to present "the" necessary path to follow, to "prove" the correctness of her view inductively and/or deductively; it was rather to reveal the sense of a situation, to point to its central feature: its openness. When we judge her a "failure," we treat her practical political work as a closed thing with only one possible signification; and therewith we fall back into a view of a linear and mechanically unrolling history. History as lived is precisely the openness of interrogation; and Luxemburg's task as practical theoretician was to focus on this openness, on the possible class-consciousness with which the situation is rich.

It would be an oversimplification to assert that since class consciousness is the central variable of the revolutionary process, the task of the theorist is to act always in such a way as to raise the level of that consciousness. For it supposes that we know what class consciousness is; it implies that class consciousness is a thing, and that it grows, somehow, by the addition of little bits of information received from outside itself; and it makes theory into a kind of tool or weapon, preparing the ground for the famous practice of "substitutionism" whereby the Party as the possessor of the theory substitutes itself for the masses, whose "correct" consciousness it claims to be. Of course, class consciousness is not indeterminate either; and we have already mentioned the correctness of Lukács' epistemological appropriation of Luxemburg's use of the notion of the necessity of the "final goal" of socialism. But Luxemburg also avoids the trap of an external, linear conception of history, which would contain a fixed view of the nature of socialist consciousness. Thus, we find her speaking with confidence and sanguinity of the need for the proletariat to accede to power several times, each time losing it, before it finally learns to establish its new society.[30] And we are struck by her continual return to the historical "failures" of the movement—lost strikes and revolts, 1848, 1871, the history of May Day, etc.—as being a necessary component in the growth of class consciousness. She rejects a "materialist" explanation of these "failures," refusing to

30. *Ibid.*, p. 123.

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explain them away; instead, and the difference is crucial, she gives them a positive significance because of the new dimensions that they open.

Yet, we are still confronted with the problem of theory's being at once a theory *of* the actual movement and at the same time *"rising above"* it. In effect, this is a false problem once we escape from the external, linear view of History and recognize that our theory is part and parcel of history itself. Theory cannot be simply a static reflection of the present, nor an external construct that serves as guide. The reason for this is that the central variable determining the historical process is not fixed but in-determinant, open, changing and creating new significations. Theory is not and cannot be a system—at least not if it is revolutionary theory. And indeed, in what sense can we say that Rosa Luxemburg "had" a theory? Certainly, she accepted Marxism, and attempted to present a theoretical correction of it in *The Accumulation of Capital.* But in her practice, and in the relation of her theory to practice, she never attempted to present a series of positive and determined formulae that could be followed. For example, is the "Mass Strike" essay the presentation of a theory? Certainly not in the traditional sense; yet as engaged Marxists we talk about it as such. Why?

If we look at the theory of the Mass Strike, what is central is the shifting forms taken by class consciousness, expressing itself now politically, now economically, now in minor movements or in quiescence, now in major flare-ups whose cause seems minor in comparison with the enormity of the class's oppression. Moreover, the Mass Strike movement that culminated in the Revolution of 1905 is seen to have its roots in activity in different geographical regions over a period of nearly a decade. The "Mass Strike" itself, Luxemburg explicitly notes, is a concept, a totalization, the unity of a variety of actions. The historical actors did not sense themselves a part of this movement whose unity the theorist presents; they did not follow directives in moving their struggle from one place to another, one region or issue to another. Yet the Mass Strike is there. It is the historical *sense* of proletarian struggle, not consciously appended to the individual actions but their latent *meaning.* The theory gives an empirical accounting *of* the events, and thus is a theory *of* the activity; and at the same time *"rises above" insofar as* it unifies and designates the *possibility* that has been opened.

What is the process of revolution, and on what does it depend? Ultimately, on a free space, on a vacuum that is created and felt in the power relations that have hitherto held the proletariat in bonds. The opening of this space is not the result of theory or class consciousness in the sense that they would function like a kind of can-opener. Obviously, there are real events and material conditions which play a role. But when we begin to analyze these events and material conditions, we find that they could play their role only because of their lived, human *significance.* And it is through this notion that theory finds its role as *rising above.* It rises above

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insofar as it is the intergrated *sense and possibility* of the present whose theory it is. It is this not simply as theory, but as lived experience, insists Rosa Luxemburg, noting that "in the storm of the revolutionary period, the proletarian is transformed from a provident family man demanding support into a 'revolutionary romantic' for whom the highest good, namely life—not to speak of material well-being—has little value in comparison with the ideals of the struggle." [31] The sense and possibility, inherent in the movement and theorized by the revolutionary, are the *difference* which makes all the difference in revolutionary action.

The notion of the "two reefs" between which revolutionary practice must continually navigate can be extended to the paradoxes of revolutionary theory. As a theory of practice within capitalist society, it must remain affixed to its material base; yet at the same time it must "rise above" and dwell in the realm of sense, of the difference, of the possible. The duality that I have pointed to in the theoretical and practical activity of Rosa Luxemburg is not something that the famous "Aufhebung" can take care of—somehow—magically. Rather, it is constitutive of the project itself.

31. "Mass Strike, Party and Trade Unions," pp. 246-247.

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Towards a Social Theory of Literature

by Scott Sanders

What follows is a provisional formulation of the theory upon which my own recent literary studies have been based,[1] provisional because all theory is subject to test and alteration, provisional also because research into the social character of literature is still in its early stages. The theory itself derives, with some modifications, from the work of Lucien Goldmann,[2] and, beyond him, from Georg Lukács, Plekhanov and Marx. Even such a tentative formulation has seemed to me useful so that, by being made explicit, the premises of a sociological theory might be debated, and the methodology might be tested.

In order to understand the present resistance to social theories of literature we must first look briefly at the left-wing criticism of the 1930's, because New Criticism, which is largely responsible for that resistance, was conceived in reaction against the radical social interpretation of literature. This left-wing criticism was the flawed thesis to which New Criticism was the flawed antithesis. The weaknesses and strengths of the two brands of criticism are complementary. Goldmann's sociological theory of literature seems to me to offer a synthesis of the respective strengths, while avoiding most of the weaknesses.

I

W.K. Wimsatt, Jr., one of the stalwart opponents of sociological literary theory, sums up what has become the received—and to a considerable extent justified—opinion of thirties left-wing criticism, when he observes that "Marxism and the forms of social criticism more closely related to it have never had any real concern with literature and literary problems," because, he explains, by insisting upon social and economic factors such criticism "completely destroys the literary

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1. See Scott Sanders, *D.H. Lawrence: The World of the Major Novels* (New York and London, 1973).

2. Goldmann's principle works include the following: *Le dieu caché* (Paris, 1959), trans. by Philip Thody as *The Hidden God* (London, 1964); *Sciences humaines et philosophie* (Paris, 1952), trans. by H.V. White and Robert Anchor as *The Human Sciences and Philosophy* (London, 1969); *Pour une sociologie du roman* (Paris, 1964) *Mensch, Gemeinschaft und Welt in der Philosophie Immanuel Kants* (Zurich, 1945), trans. by Robert Black as *Immanuel Kant* (London, 1971), *Recherches dialectiques* (Paris, 1959), *Structures mentales et la creation culturelle* (Paris, 1970), *Marxisme et les sciences humaines* (Paris, 1970); *La creation culturelle dans la societe moderne* (Paris, 1971); and the most accessible introduction in English: "The Sociology of Literature: Status and Problems of Method," *International Social Sciences Journal*, XIX, No. 4 (1967).

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viewpoint." In the last analysis, he complains, "it does not believe in the work of art."[3]

One need not look far for evidence to support Wimsatt's judgment. The radical critics were less concerned with interpreting literature than with changing the world. Purely literary questions paled beside those of politics and economics. Against the evils of unemployment, rearmament, fascism and capitalism, every defense was summoned, including literature and literary criticism. In a series of articles in *The Liberator* of 1923 Floyd Dell set the pattern for much that was to follow when he declared that the mainstream of American literature had always been radical. He exhorted his contemporary writers to abandon their bohemian postures, to return from comfortable exile, and to once again interpret the world for common people so that together they might build a new society.[4]

This evangelical note runs through all the criticism which appeared in leftist periodicals between the wars. Resurrected in 1926 from the ashes of *The Liberator*, the *New Masses* quickly became the chief organ for radical criticism, carrying samples of proletarian writing, offering political evaluations of current literature, mediating between Moscow and New York, providing guidelines for revolutionary writers. In its pages the critic became a legislator, a role which many intellectuals were eager to assume. In a statement of editorial policy which appeared in the third issue of *Partisan Review*, for example, Philip Rahv and Wallace Phelps argue that the critic must supply writers with "adequate guidance in their quest of realistic revolutionary themes." "The critic," they add, "is the ideologist of the literary movement, and any ideologist, as Lenin pointed out, 'is worthy of that name only when he marches ahead of the spontaneous movement, points out the real road...' "[5] Critics therefore occupy the literary vanguard: they are the scouts who forge ahead towards the revolutionary promised land.

The reference to Lenin is not accidental, for the American radicals modeled their criticism after the Soviet example. Lenin, Trotsky, Stalin and the Soviet critics in general inherited from their 19th century Russian predecessors—Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov and Pisarev —the enlightenment demand that literature serve immediate political purposes, that it speak directly to social needs. Even Edmund Wilson, one of the most skeptical of the radical critics, could echo Stalin ("the writer is the engineer of the human soul") in 1932 by urging writers to become "engineers of ideas".[6] Of course there were models nearer to hand, for

3. *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (New York, 1957), pp. 271, 270.

4. Cf. Daniel Aaron, *Writers on the Left* (New York, 1961), pp. 121-5. My account of the radical critics is indebted to Aaron's patient and perceptive study.

5. "Problems and Perspectives in Revolutionary Literature," *Partisan Review*, I, No. 3 (June-July, 1934), pp. 4-5.

6. From an editorial, "Brokers and Pioneers," *New Republic*, LXX (March 23, 1932), p. 145.

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American men of letters had from the beginning been pragmatic in their view of literature. No less an authority than Whitman had argued that literature should be regarded "as only a weapon, an instrument, in the service of something larger than itself."[7]

To begin with, that "something larger" which literature was to serve was the working class. In his polemical history of American literature, *The Great Tradition*, (1933), Granville Hicks proclaimed that "The writer, if he is accurately and intelligently to portray American life, if he is to express whatever is vital and hopeful in the American spirit, must ally himself with the working class."[8] Hicks and those who sympathized with him set out to enlist allies, in the past as well as the present. Minor battles raged over Henry James and Mark Twain and Whitman: were they for the working-class or against? In *The Liberation of American Literature*, (1932) V. F. Calverton hacked his way through our literary past, reducing the stoutest reputations to bleeding carcasses. Hicks, Calverton and their like blamed Melville or Emerson or Thoreau for failing to perceive the world in twentieth century terms, more particularly for failing to perceive it with the eyes of Hicks, Calverton and their like. As for literature of the present, leftist critics set out, as John Strachey said of his own practice in 1934, "to establish a line between poetry which is on the side of the workers, and poetry which is on the side of the capitalists."[9] Writers who continued to identify with the aristocracy or bourgeoisie—favorite examples included Proust, Joyce and Lawrence—were labelled decadent. Writers such as Kafka who could not be readily identified with any class at all were labelled escapist. Thus were introduced two of the least useful terms in the critical vocabulary.

The "something larger" which literature was to serve soon became, for orthodox critics, the party. Lenin had given warrant for this development in his 1905 speech on "Party Organization and Party Literature." Throughout the thirties Stalin demanded stricter and stricter obedience from intellectuals, and this trend was mirrored in party-sponsored organizations such as the League of American Writers, and in party-sponsored periodicals such as *New Masses*. Thus in 1937 Ralph Fox could observe, in the latter journal, that "A revolutionary writer is a party writer..."[10] The critic ceased to be a legislator and became a flunky, delivering judgments which had been decided elsewhere.

For critics who found the mantle of legislator or flunky uncomfortable, for artists unwilling to choose sides, for poets reluctant to think of their

7. Quoted in Aaron, p. 25.
8. *The Great Tradition: An Interpretation of American Literature Since the Civil War* (New York, 1933), p. 303.
9. *Literature and Dialectical Materialism* (New York, 1934), p. 33.
10. "Socialist Realism," *New Masses* (May 18, 1937), p. 16. Fox was the author of one of the most prescriptive and reductive tracts from this period, *The Novel and the People* (New York, 1937).

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words as weapons, there appeared little relief this side of the revolution. "The writers and artists who are on the side of the working class," John Strachey wrote in 1934, "will of necessity, during the revolutionary period, find that they have to forge of their art a sharp sword for use in the struggle which they cannot avoid. It will be only after the triumph of the workers that their work can become less concerned with pressing and desperate social issues."[11] These words also remind us, while we are rehearsing the weaknesses of the leftist critics, that the urgency and social commitment which marred their criticism helped to redeem their lives.

The mounting demand for orthodoxy, together with disillusionment over the Spanish Civil War, the Moscow trials, the Comintern campaign against Trotsky and the Hitler-Stalin Pact, drove most of the radical writers away from the Party by the end of the decade. The *Partisan Review* group broke away from *New Masses* in 1936, and in 1937 reappeared as part of the anti-Stalinist left. Hicks, Calverton, John Dos Passos, Malcolm Cowley, Max Eastman and others less well known severed their ties with the radical organizations. By 1940 the Communist literary movement was effectively dead in the United States, and the criticism which it had spawned served, both for political and intellectual reasons, to innoculate the next generation of critics against all social theories of literature.[12]

II

The new orthodoxy which dominated literary theory for three decades after 1940 can be understood in part as a reaction against the leftist criticism of the 1930's. If the thesis was a criticism which emphasized politics, ideology and history, which stressed the connection between literature and society, the antithesis was a criticism which emphasized aesthetic form, neglected history and divorced literature from society. The framers of the new orthodoxy often explicitly named the leftist critics as their opponents. T. S. Eliot conducted a genteel feud against them in his journal *Criterion* from 1929 onwards. The Vanderbilt Agrarians (with whom Eliot was later to acknowledge kinship), including Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom and Robert Penn Warren, declared themselves in 1930 opposed to the "Sovietists or Communists", an opposition which Tate and Ransom restated in their influential criticism later in the decade. F. R. Leavis inveighed against the Marxists in his journal *Scrutiny* from its founding in 1932 until about 1939, when Marxsim ceased to pose either an intellectual or a political threat in England. The radical critics also figured as opponents in essays of the late 1930's and 1940's by R. S. Crane, Cleanth

11. Strachey, p. 53.

12. Several important critics were permanently influenced by the Marxist perspective, but they founded no school as the New Critics did: Lionel Trilling, Kenneth Burke, Edmund Wilson, David Daiches, Malcolm Cowley, Philip Rahv, Ian Watt, L.C. Knights.

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Brooks and Rene Wellek.[13]

In short, what I have called the new orthodoxy—and I will describe the articles of that orthodoxy in a moment—cannot be understood apart from the social context in which it was created. The leftist critics worked for the most part outside the academies, they were journalists or writers or editors, dependent for their living upon the radical movement. The critics who opposed them in the 1930's and who supplanted them in the 1940's were almost all in universities, dependent for their living upon a highly conservative institution, and upon an academic audience for their influence. Whereas the radical critics demanded commitment to the cause of revolution, the academic critics insisted upon scholarly detachment. Thus irony became one the the new critical touchstones. In the second issue of *Scrutiny* Leavis complained that amidst the current preoccupation with political action, criticism had gone by the way.[14] Joseph Wood Crutch agreed with this view in 1934, arguing that to subordinate literary criticism to partisan political interests was to degrade it, for its proper concerns were aesthetic rather than political, its proper function that of urging its audience to contemplation rather than action.[15] Criticism which demands that poetry explain anything, which demands that it serve any interests other than those of art, wrote Allen Tate in a similar vein in 1936, is misdirected, for poetry is an end in itself, it "is the art of apprehending and concentrating our experience in the mysterious limitations of form."[16] When terms such as mystery, contemplation and detachment creep into the argument, as they creep into the work of almost all the critics whom I have mentioned, then we have left the activists in the streets and have entered with the priests into the academy.

In order to save literature from politics it was necessary to argue that some dimension of the poem or novel existed outside history. Thus Eliot faulted the leftist critics for ignoring the "transcendent" element in literature: "Art, we feel, aspires to the condition of the timeless; and communist art, according to the sentence of those who foretell what it is to

13. Eliot: see especially "Commentary," *Criterion*, XII (1932-3), pp. 244-9; for his kinship with Agrarians, see *After Strange Gods* (London, 1934), pp. 15-6; Vanderbilt Agrarians: John Crowe Ransome *et.al.*, *I'll Take My Stand* (New York, 1930). Tate: *Reactionary Essays* (New York, 1936), esp. Preface; Ransom: "Criticism, Inc.," in *The World's Body* (New York, 1938); Leavis and *Scrutiny*: see esp. "Manifesto," I, No. 1 (May 1932); review of Max Eastman's *The Literary Mind*, *Scrutiny*, I, No. 1 (May 1932), pp. 20-32; "What's Wrong with Criticism?" I, No. 2 (Sept. 1932), pp. 132-46; "Under Which King, Bezonian?"I, No. 3 (Dec. 1932), pp. 205-14; "Restatement for Critics," I, No. 4 (Mar. 1933). Crane: "History vs. Criticism in the University Study of Literature," *English Journal* (Oct., 1935), pp. 645-67; Brooks: "The Heresy of Paraphrase," *The Well Wrought Urn* (New York, 1947); Wellek, "Literature and Society," in Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, third ed. (New York, 1956).

14. "What's Wrong with Criticism?", *Scrutiny*, I, No. 2 (Sept., 1932), p. 135.

15. *Was Europe a Success?* (New York, 1934).

16. *Reactionary Essays* (New York, 1936), p. xi. Tate specifically names the "neo-communists" as those chiefly responsible for making criticism a branch of politics (pp. ix-x).

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be, is bound to the temporal."[17] R. S. Crane, in a seminal article—it was later cited by John Crowe Ransom as marking a new direction in literary studies—of 1935, significantly entitled "History *vs.* Criticism in the University Study of Literature," set criticism the task of studying imaginative works "with respect to those qualities which can truly be said to be timeless...in the sense that they can be adequately discerned and evaluated in the light of general aesthetic principles quite apart from any knowledge of their origin or historical filiation."[18] The word timeless—like mystery and contemplation—becomes a key term in the new critical orthodoxy. What we have come to call New Criticism is founded on the assumption that there is something left in a work of art once history has been stripped away, and that this residue is the proper object of criticism. Cleanth Brooks, for example, in the Preface to *The Well Wrought Urn*, describes his critical purpose in exactly these terms.

In order to save literature from ideological interpretation it was necessary to argue either that literature does not deal in ideas—a poem should not mean but be—or else that ideas are too intimately bound up with form to be separable. We find in the academic critics abundant examples of the first argument—Eliot claiming that there is nothing in literature to interpret, Tate declaring that it is a heresy to ask poetry to explain anything—but only the second has been stated with any cogency. The classic instance is the chapter on "The Heresy of Paraphrase" in *The Well Wrought Urn*, where Brooks argues that the only satisfactory statement of a poem's meaning is the poem itself. Whereas the leftist critics had concerned themselves with the political opinions or social content in a work of literature, to the neglect of form, Brooks advised critics not to seek any such content but to concentrate simply on form. By so doing he hoped to avoid the "battles of the last twenty-five years over the 'use of poetry'," battles which the leftists had carried into the journals, newspapers, universities and even professional organizations.[19] A generation of students was introduced to literary study through Brooks and Warren's textbook *Understanding Poetry*, (1938) with a stern warning against "message-hunting", for the leftist critics had been reductive and ruthless in their search for political messages. Advice to ignore the message and study the medium, to seek the timeless and ignore the temporal, proved very useful to literary intellectuals

17. "Commentary," *Criterion*, XII (1932-3), p. 248.
18. *English Journal* (Oct., 1935), pp. 645-67.
19. Brooks, p. 202. In 1935 the College Conference on English in the Central Atlantic States featured a symposium on "Literature and Society", the proceedings of which were reported in the *English Journal*, XXIV (1935), pp. 209-39. The third article, setting the leftist challenge to teachers of literature, is by Granville Hicks. The first two, by Clara M. Kirk and Everett L. Hunt, reflect the anxiety among teachers of English who were being ordered to take sides, who were rapidly losing students to the social sciences, who were struggling to make their work appear relevant to the historical crisis. Study of this and similar reports concerning the dilemma of teachers during the 1930's, the war and the Cold War, will suggest, better than any number of prefaces and introductions, the basis for the vogue of New Criticism.

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during the Cold War, who found it in their interest to regard literature as an ahistorical phenomenon which did not reflect on society or social change.

Respect for the autonomy of the work of art and close attention to its form became the distinguishing features of New Criticism. Leavis and his colleagues founded *Scrutiny*, as the name of that journal suggests, on the principle of close reading, vowing to succeed precisely where the Marxists failed, in attaching critical judgments securely to the text. Even more resolutely than Leavis, the American New Critics urged us to view the literary text as an organic whole, as a system of mutually-conditioning elements, and they provided us with much of the language necessary for talking about the inner workings of a poem or novel. But their methodology tended to prescribe their subject matter: emphasis on technique led them to value complexity for its own sake. The Metaphysicals, the Symbolists and the Modernists supplied them with tough, resistent poems worthy of their expertise. Ambivalence, ambiguity, tension, paradox, irony and wit became the key terms in their analysis. But clarity of purpose and lucidity of style, on the other hand, left no mystery for the critic to unravel. They tended to shun works which manifested designs upon the reader, for the reader must be moved only to contemplation, not to action. Hence they gravitated toward poetry, especially lyric poetry, while the leftist critics gravitated toward the social novel.

When Ransom entitled an essay of 1937 "Criticism, Inc.," he was not being wholly ironic. The new class of literary scholars in the academy had indeed founded a business, staked out a territory. The critic became an expert, a necessary mediator between reader and poem. The stress on complexity, on the subtleties of language, might be used, as it was used by Eliot and by the group surrounding *Scrutiny*, to exclude all but the specially-cultivated minority from true appreciation of literature. Strenuous criticism might become—as literary allusion had become for Joyce and Pound—a defense against the vulgar reader. The leftist critics had appealed, if crudely and ineffectually, to the masses; academic criticism increasingly appealed to an elite.

In *The Verbal Icon*—whose title, like that of *The Well Wrought Urn*, expresses a view of the literary work as sacred object—W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., describes the creation of a poem as the act of *cutting it off from its context*, both biographical and historical.[20] In his hands, and in the hands of Brooks, Ransom and their successors, the critical act similarly becomes that of cutting the poem off from its psychological and social context, setting it adrift, an isolated, self-contained aesthetic world. Ruling out of bounds all questions of intention or effect, Wimsatt divorces the text from its creator on the one side and from its audience on the other. The poem or novel is

20. *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington, Ky., 1954), p. 12.

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thus removed from the realm of human action, to be deposited, like the products of our factories, in the realm of natural fact. Flaubert was evidently premature in saying that Taine had made it impossible any longer to believe that literature had fallen out of the sky, for the New Critics, although conceding in theory that literature is created by human beings within history, in practice treated the question of genesis as irrelevant.

The dogma of aesthetic autonomy raises problems as serious as those raised by the dogma of economic determinism which it was designed to replace. Chief among the difficulties is that it makes the writing of literary history impossible. In *Theory of Literature*, which codified the principles of New Criticism, Rene Wellek offers the most sophisticated attempt to reconcile the static analysis of isolated literary texts with the dynamic perspective of history. It is possible and desirable, he argues to trace "the history of literature as an art, in comparative isolation from its social history, the biographies of authors, or the appreciation of individual works."[21] Once again we encounter the assumption that something is left when history is stripped away, and that this residue is the proper object of the literary historian. Following Eliot, Wellek describes literature "as a whole system of works," and talks of placing individual texts within the overall "scheme of literary development." But both the system and the scheme are conceived spatially rather than temporally. There is no logic within this scheme, no reason for one literary form to succeed another, unless one posits, as Northrop Frye, Eliot, and Wellek himself have done, a suprahistorical force called tradition, which gradually unfolds itself, like Hegel's World Spirit, within the coarse flesh of literature.

Without appealing outside the text to biography or history, the critic cannot explain literary evolution. Rejecting the social perspective, the critic can describe but not explain, he can write chronicle but not history. Wellek concedes that literary evolution "is partly internal, caused by exhaustion and the desire for change, but also partly external, caused by social, intellectual, and all other cultural changes."[22] But forms do not desire to change themselves: men do the desiring, and men cannot be understood apart from their history. In short there are no internal factors of the sort Wellek proposes. There are only external factors, namely "social, intellectual, and all other cultural changes." If we are to understand literary history, and within that history the individual work of art, we must understand it as part of the total historical process. And it is because he helps us towards such an understanding that I turn now to the work of Lucien Goldmann.

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21. Wellek and Warren, p. 254. For a fuller critique of Wellek's historiography, see Louis Kampf's review essay on Literary History, *History and Theory*, VI (1967), pp. 72-88. For a general critique of the ahistorical bias of the New Critics, see Lionel Trilling, "The Sense of the Past," *The Liberal Imagination* (New York, 1950).

22. Wellek and Warren, p. 267.

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III

During the last twenty-five years before his death in 1970, Lucien Goldmann elaborated a sociological theory of culture, embracing philosophical and artistic as well as literary creation, which owed its aesthetic to Kant, its emphasis on historical evolution to Hegel, and its view of the relation between intellectual and social structure to Marx.

From Kant, who was the subject of his first book, Goldmann derived his conception of the work of art as "a transcendence...of the tension between extreme unity and extreme complexity; between on the one hand the variety of a complex imaginary universe and on the other hand the unity and rigour of creation."[23] Unity in complexity: we are familiar with the notion from Coleridge, who also borrowed it from the Germans. Varieties of criticism may thus be distinguished according to whether they concentrate upon the rich particulars of a literary text, or upon its essential structure. Goldmann's own criticism, because of its sociological bias, tended to concentrate upon the unifying structures and to neglect the minute and various facts of language. But this was a failure of practice rather than principle, for he always insisted that the task of criticism is to reveal the connection between the two poles.

A standard of aesthetic value follows from this conception of art. The greater the tension within the artistic universe, the richer and more varied its elements, the greater will be the artist's triumph in unifying it, and the more valuable will be the work itself. This measure of aesthetic value, we shall see later on, coincides for Goldmann with the measure of historical importance. Consequently he chose in his own criticism to examine recognized masterpieces—the *Pensées* of Pascal, the theatre of Racine, Sartre and Genet, the fiction of Malraux, the poetry of Valéry and Baudelaire. Doubtless he also chose master works because they had always proved most resistant to sociological explanation. If his theory applied to major literary texts it would apply *a fortiori* to lesser ones.

By Goldmann's standard all propaganda, no matter what cause it serves, will be inferior art. Although social groups do use literature in their struggles with each other, the writer himself must not be asked, as he was asked by the leftist critics in the 1930's, to become a forger of weapons. The critic has no business offering guidelines for the artist; his proper place is not in the advance guard but in the dusty rear. Valid criticism, in other words, operates only after the fact. Any attempt to impose a doctrine will degrade the literary work, because it is a concrete universe of creatures and things rather than an abstract universe of ideas. The critic must accordingly begin with an examination of that concrete universe, respecting its variety and integrity, carefully analyzing its forms, its language and its structure.

23. "Criticism and Dogmatism in Literature," in David Cooper (ed.), *The Dialectics of Liberation* (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 142.

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Thus far Goldmann would be followed by the New Critics, notably by Rene Wellek, who makes a similar argument in *Theory of Literature* and whose aesthetic likewise descends from Kant. But here Goldmann advances beyond the New Critics, as Hegel surpassed Kant, by insisting that once the literary work is examined in isolation it must be interpreted historically.

From Hegel, especially by way of Lukács, Goldmann derived his emphasis on the historical evolution of literary forms. Hegel also reinforced Kant's teaching that the proper method for understanding any phenomenon is by reference to the whole of which it forms a part; and for human activity the relevant encompassing whole is the human community. But it was from Marx that Goldmann adopted the materialist premises which enabled him to interpret the structure and evolution of literary forms as part of the total historical process. Those premises can be stated briefly as follows: (1) all facts are historical, and history is a single coherent process; (2) cultural creation in particular cannot be understood apart from other human activity; (3) human consciousness develops dialectically, reacting to and reacting upon the conditions of existence, conditions which are social, political, intellectual and religious, as well as economic; (4) but economic factors have been up until the present time the prime influence on consciousness, because men have been compelled to devote so much of their energies to securing their livelihood. With these qualifications, Goldmann accepted Marx's view that social existence determines consciousness. In addition he assumed—together with Marx, Freud and Piaget—that all human activity betrays a significant structure, that its *essence* is structure.

From these premises, which cannot be proved but can be tested, Goldmann constructed his sociological theory of literature. In outline that theory runs as follows: The significance of a literary work does not reside in the details of style or character, but in the mental structures which bind it together. Neither transcendent ideas nor private inventions, these mental structures, these habits of thought and feeling, have been elaborated by human groups in the course of shared experience. They represent collective solutions to common problems, collective responses to a common social situation. In other words, if we wish to discover the essential meaning of a literary text we must reveal the mental categories which give it structure; but in so doing we uncover a phenomenon which is historical rather then purely literary, social rather than individual. The fundamental relation between a literary work and its social context is not, therefore, one of shared *content*—a court poet, for example, writing about kings, a proletarian novelist about workers—but of shared *mental structures*. Thus even when Dickens writes of the slums, he does so from the perspective of those who live in the town-houses, regarding the individual as the unit of success or failure, treating charity as the prime social virtue, promising an ultimate harmony between the social classes.

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The critic's task is to isolate the significant categories of thought and feeling "which shape both the empirical consciousness of a certain social group and the imaginary universe created by the writer."[24] The more comprehensive the imaginary universe and the more rigorous its unity, and therefore the greater its value in terms of the Kantian aesthetic, the more clearly is it the expression of the collective consciousness of some major social group. Therefore aesthetic value coincides with historical importance. In the very greatest works the unifying structure takes the form of a world-vision, that is, a total, coherent view of man, nature and society. The sources of these totalizing visions, as opposed to the partial and incoherent visions projected by smaller human groups, have generally been social classes. This is so for historical reasons. Up to the present time, Western societies have been stratified primarily according to economic criteria, and the major strata, which is to say the economic classes, have elaborated world-visions in competition with each other. By means of its world-vision, a class justifies or repudiates its social situation, and defines itself over against all other social groups. This group consciousness tends toward coherence and unity, but only achieves such total integration in the work of exceptional philosophers and artists, who express the world-vision on a conceptual or imaginative plane. Goldmann thus redefines genius in historical terms: the great representative writer is the one who succeeds in articulating the maximum *potential consciousness* of a social group; and the very greatest writer is the one who synthesizes the ideas, aspirations and feelings of a social class into a world-vision.

Goldmann's method of research follows directly from his theory of literature. One begins with an intensive, chronological study of all the works of a given writer, examining the empirical facts which figure in any such analysis: stylistic traits, formal conventions, narrative or metrical techniques, characterization, plot, use of symbols and myth, explicit ideas, and so on. One then formulates an hypothesis about the essential ideological structure of the work which will account for as many of the details of style, narrative, and so forth as possible. One then returns to the text in search of new facts, then modifies the original hypothesis, and so on, moving dialectically back and forth between the conceptual schema and textual facts, until one is satisfied that no other structural hypothesis can account for so much of the text.[25] (Goldmann appeals at this point to quantitative criteria which I find it difficult to apply, except subjectively.) The ideological structure which one discovers by this process will approximate more or less closely, depending upon the quality of the text, to a world vision. In other words, it will supply predicates to sentences of the

24. "The Sociology of Literature: Status and Problems of Method," *International Social Sciences Journal*, XIX, No. 4 (1967), p. 495.

25. This procedure differs from the "philological circle" employed by Leo Spitzer in that Goldmann offers hypotheses about world-views, which are social facts, while Spitzer offers hypotheses about psychological traits, which are private facts.

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following sort: "Man is—", "God is—", "Nature is—", "Society is—", "Death means—", "Life means—". The critic seeks to determine which mental categories figure most prominently in the writer's vision, and how they are inter-related. In his studies of Pascal and Racine, for example, Goldmann discovered a set of attitudes concerning the relations between the categories of World, God and Man, which structured the work of both writers, and which he labelled the tragic vision. In my own study of D.H. Lawrence the chief categories have proven to be nature and culture, and, intimately associated with them, body and mind. It is not a question simply of naming significant categories, of course, but of describing the attitudes associated with them, the values attached to them, the complex habits of thought and feeling which bind them together into a coherent view of the world.

Having isolated this mental structure, the critic then studies the intellectual, political, social and economic life of the period in search of a social group for which this world view makes sense. According to other historical sources, what human group—familial, professional, religious, intellectual, national, economic—also sees the world in these terms? What kinds of social experiences does it explain or reflect, and which groups experience society in this way? To return to Goldmann's example, he showed that the tragic vision was an expression of the Jansenist religious movement, which was itself the ideological response of the *noblesse de robe* to its social situation in 16th and 17th century France. Similarly in my Lawrence study I have tried to show that his distinction between nature and culture reproduces the division of labor between physical and mental functions, which in turn reflects the division of contemporary English society between working class and managerial class. By accepting this division but reversing the priority, favoring nature over culture, body over mind, Lawrence produced an ideology which led in one direction to Guild Socialism and revolutionary syndicalism, and in another direction to fascism.

Goldmann provided the following convenient summary of his research procedure, distinguishing three stages: "In the first the text will be seen as the expression of a world vision; in the second this world vision will be more closely analyzed as constituting a whole made up of the intellectual and social life of the group; and in the third the thoughts and feelings of the members of this group will be seen as an expression of their economic and social life."[26] The first stage is that of *comprehension*, discovering the inner structure of the text; the next stage is *explanation*, showing the functional significance of this structure within some larger whole such as a religious sect or a social group. New Criticism halts after the first step. The

26. *The Hidden God* (London, 1964), p. 99. For the distinction between *comprehension* and *explication* see Goldmann, "Introduction aux premiers ecrits de Georges Lukács," in Lukács, *La Theorie du roman* (Paris, 1968), p. 158n.

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leftist critics limited themselves for the most part to the third.

In order to accommodate more recent literature Goldmann was forced to modify his theory somewhat. The process of critical comprehension remains the same, but we must alter our mode of explanation. For the nearer we approach our own time the more difficult it becomes to attach a given work to a particular social group. And this is so again for historical reasons. In capitalist society the market has come to dominate all levels of culture, and the mass media, which are securely in the hands of the governing class, have shaped the thinking of every social group. Opposition cultures—black art is only the most conspicuous recent example—are quickly absorbed by the market and the media. Of course the greater part of culture in any period embodies the ideology of the governing class. But at no time in history has the dominant class been so thorough in eliminating rival ideologies. And at no time has the gifted writer been so cut off from all social groups. Almost all of the art which we call modernist is characterized by a stance of opposition to the ruling ideology. But what this art offers us, with rare exceptions—I think of works by Brecht and Eisenstein for example—is not an alternative world-vision, but the *search* for a vision. It is art which registers the pain of what is there and the ache for what is missing. It is art preoccupied with absence: with lack of order, the lack of coherent character, the lack of authentic values. But these are generalized experiences in our society, affecting all social orders. For the modern writer, in particular, there is no longer an integral connection between participation in a social group and creation of culture. Nor is there for the modern audience so direct a connection between its social position and the art which it experiences. Hence the sociologist of literature, in dealing with more recent texts, often must refer the habits of thought and feeling which he discovers there to society as a whole rather than to a particular social group. None of this fundamentally alters Goldmann's theory. The relation between literature and society is still one of shared mental structures, but these structures are no longer mediated by definable social groups.

Goldmann thus helps us to overcome the contradictions between the extreme materialism of the radical critics and the extreme idealism of the academic critics. The writer neither passively reflects social reality, as the leftists assumed in practice, nor does he create in an aesthetic void, as the New Critics assumed. Rather he responds creatively to a shared world; he discovers forms capable of shaping and unifying a world-vision which is already latent in society. Where the New Critics focused upon aesthetic values and formal questions, and the leftist critics focused upon social values and questions of content, Goldmann insisted that form is itself the expression of historical content, and that aesthetic value coincides with social value. His theory synthesizes the microhistory of critics such as Brooks and the macrohistory of critics such as Hicks; it mediates between the criticism which talks only of stylistic conflict and the criticism which

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talks only of class conflict. His critical method enables us to relate the minute and particular facts of language to the larger and ultimately more important social realities.

If Goldmann's theory of literature is valid, then other critical methods appear limited in fundamental ways. Textual analysis, for example, although a necessary first step in any criticism, is incapable of determining the significance of any given stylistic trait, or the significance of the whole work. Lists of ambiguous metaphors or metrical irregularities remain inert facts until illuminated by an hypothesis concerning the structure, and therefore the significance, of the text. Studies of influence similarly fail to explain anything about a work of art; because the significant question is not who influenced a particular writer, but why a writer suffered this particular influence. And the answer to that question is historical rather than literary. Literary history of the sort proposed by Wellek and practiced by Northrop Frye also explains nothing, because it is not history at all. It speaks only of forms and not of the societies in which those forms evolved. But forms do not beget forms; they are made and modified by men living in concrete circumstances. The novel passes from Defoe to Dickens, in other words, through the guts of the Industrial Revolution. Literature has no history apart from that of the whole society.

Theme and genre studies are open to the same objection, for they posit a timeless warehouse of mythic or formal archetypes through which the artist rummages at will. Like Plato's circle, the great chain of being exists somewhere outside of history, waiting to incarnate itself in another poem. Those schools of psychoanalysis which hunt for instances of the Oedipal complex appeal to the same warehouse in the sky, where immortal neuroses await fresh victims. Psychoanalytic criticism which appeals to concrete biography rather than to psychic archetypes may, on the other hand, complement the sociological approach. Goldmann conceded that sociological explanations do not exhaust the significance of a work of art. Doubtless every cultural creation has both personal and social meaning; and psychoanalysis is so far the best tool we have for determining the personal significance of any human act. But a literary work interests the historian in proportion as it escapes merely individual significance, in other words, in proportion as it eludes psychoanalytic explanation. By focusing on the individual creator, psychoanalysis is unable to distinguish between the literary work and any other personal symptom, whether the twitch of an eye or psychotic raving. Because the world-vision which structures any coherent work of art is not an individual but a social creation, no amount of searching in the author's biography will reveal the true significance of this structure. Psychoanalysis can therefore be incorporated into the sociological perspective, but the reverse is not possible.

With respect to other critical approaches in general, Goldmann's theory is inclusive rather than exclusive. Stylistics or influence studies, for

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example, are not invalid but merely incomplete forms of criticism. In other words, we need not abandon those traditional modes of study which ignore without denying the social basis of art; we need rather to intergrate them into a more comprehensive criticism, which must rest on a more comprehensive theory of literature. Whether or not Goldmann's solution proves to be the most convincing one, any comprehensive theory of literature must be sociological and historical, must, in other words, aim at elucidating the connections between literature and the life of society.

More broadly, Goldmann's theory calls into question our academic divisions, and the private entrepreneurial form of research fostered by our competitive academic system. The divisions within our universities have become administrative and professional conveniences, which bear no relation to the human reality which we are committed to study. The problems we confront in our attempts to understand human culture are too complex to admit of private solutions. If we are to achieve any genuine understanding of ourselves and our society we must ignore academic divisions and we must undertake collective research.

This is especially true in our study of literature. The arts arise from the community; they both reflect and shape the ordinary life of society. They bring to consciousness the feelings and ideas which men share, the experiences which men suffer in common. In recent decades criticism in America has tended to ignore the links between literature and other cultural forms, between art and social life. These links must be re-established, for they are crucial to the health of art, and to the health of society. I offer Goldmann's social theory of literature, not as a panacea, but as one major contribution to this necessary reorientation of our thought concerning the relations between art and society.

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*Introduction to the Problems of a Sociology of the Novel**

by Lucien Goldmann

In January 1961, when l'Institute de Sociologie de l'Université Libre de Bruxelles proposed that we direct a sociology of literature research group and devote our first efforts to a study of Andre Malraux' novels, we accepted quite apprehensively. Our work on the sociology of seventeenth century philosophy and tragic literature did not allow us to prejudge the possibility of a study bearing on novels written almost in a contemporary period. The first year our undertaking was chiefly devoted to a preliminary study bearing on the problems of the novel as a literary genre. We began with Georg Lukács' *Theory of the Novel*, almost a classic though still little known in France, and a book which had just appeared by René Girard, *Mensonge Romantique et Verité Romanesque*, in which the Lukácsian analyses, modified in several particular points, was rediscovered but not mentioned—and, as Girard casually told us, not known. The study of *Theory of the Novel* and Girard's book led us to formulate several sociological hypotheses which seem particularly interesting and from which our subsequent research on Malraux's novels developed. These hypotheses concern the homology between the classic novel structure and the structure of exchange in the liberal economy as well as certain parallels in their evolution.

Let us begin by tracing the basic lines of the structure which Lukács believes to characterize the novel form in general or at least one of its most important aspects (which, genetically, is probably its primordial aspect). The novel form which Lukacs studies particularizes the existence of a hero defined propitiously as the *problematic hero.*[1] The novel is the history of a *degraded* search (which Lukács calls "demonic") for authentic values in a world which itself is degraded, but at an otherwise advanced level and in a different mode. Of course, authentic values are not those the critic or the reader considers authentic but those which, without being manifest in the novel, *implicitly* organize its whole scope. Obviously these values are specific to each novel and differ from one novel to another.

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* This article is the first chapter of *Pour une sociologie du roman* (Gallimard, 1964). Translated from the French by Beth Blumenthal.

1. We must indicate, however, that the field of validity of this hypothesis must be restricted, because even if it applies to works as important in the history of literature as Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le Noir*, and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and *L'Éducation Sentimentale*, it could be applied only very partially to *La Chartreuse de Parme* and not at all to the work of Balzac, which occupies a considerable position in the history of the Western novel. Even so, Lukács' analyses seem to permit us to undertake a serious sociological study of the novel form.

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Unlike the epic or the tale, the novel is an epic genre characterized by the insurmountable rupture between the hero and the world. According to Lukács, it is an analysis of the constitution of two degradations (the hero's and the world's) which must create a *basic opposition*, the foundation of this insurmountable rupture, and at the same time a *sufficient homogeneity* to permit the existence of an epic form. The radical rupture alone would have led to tragedy or lyric poetry; the absence of a rupture or a merely accidental one could have led to the epic or the tale. Situated between the two, the novel's constitution is dialectical to the extent that it connects precisely the fundamental homogeneity of the hero and world which permits epic form and, on the other hand, their insurmountable rupture. The homogeneity of the hero and the world results from the fact that both are degraded in relation to authentic values; the opposition results from the different constitution of these two degradations.

The *demonic* hero of the novel is a lunatic or a criminal; in every case he is a *problematic* character whose degraded search, an inauthentic search for authentic values in a world of conformity and convention, constitutes the content of this new literary genre that writers created in individualistic society and called the "novel".

From this analysis Lukács elaborates a typology of the novel. Starting from the relationship between the hero and the world, he distinguishes three schematic types of 19th century Western novels, adding a fourth component, a transformation of the novel genre into new forms which will demand a different type of analysis. In 1920, this fourth possibility appears to him to be expressed above all in the novels of Tolstoy, who is oriented toward the epic. The three basic types of novel on which Lukács' analysis rests are:

a) The novel of "abstract idealism" characterized by the activity of the hero, whose consciousness is overly narrow in relation to the world's complexity (*Don Quixote, Le Rouge et le Noir*);

b) The psychological novel oriented toward the analysis of the internal life, characterized by the passive hero whose consciousness is too broad to let him be satisfied with what the conventional world can bring him (*Oblomov, l'Education Sentimentale*);

c) The educational novel ending with a *self-limitation* which, as a renunciation of the problematic search, is, however, neither an acceptance of the world of convention nor an abandonment of the implicit scale of values: it is a self-limitation which must be characterized as "virile maturity" (Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* or Gottfried Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich*).

René Girard's analyses, forty years later, often converge with Lukács'. For Girard also, the novel is the history of a degraded search (called "idolatrous") for authentic values by a problematic hero in a degraded world. Although his terminology comes from Heidegger, Girard often gives

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it a very different content. Without expanding on this point, we can say that instead of the Heideggerian duality between the ontological and the ontic, Girard employs the noticeably similar duality of the ontological and the metaphysical which, for him, corresponds to the authentic and the inauthentic. But whereas Heidegger eliminated the whole idea of progress and regression, Girard gives his terms of ontology and metaphysics a content much closer to Lukács' position, introducing between these terms a relation governed by the categories of progress and regression.[2]

Girard's typology of the novel is based on the idea that the degradation of the novel's world results from a more or less advanced ontological disease (this "more or less" is rigorously opposed to Heideggerian thought) which corresponds to a growth of metaphysical, or degraded, desire inside the novel's world. This typology is thus founded on the idea of degradation; and here Girard brings a precision to the Lukácsian analysis which seems particularly important. In Girard's eyes, the degradation of the novel's world, the progress of the ontological disease and the growth of metaphysical desire, are manifested by a greater or lesser *process of mediation* (*médiatisation*) which progressively increases the distance between metaphysical desire and the authentic search for "vertical transcendence." Examples of mediation abound in Girard's work, from the novels of chivalry interposed between *Don Quixote* and the search for chivalrous values to the lover who puts himself between the husband and his desire for his wife in Dostoevsky's *l'Eternel Mari*. But these examples do not always seem well chosen. We are not at all sure that the process of mediation is as universal a category in the novel's world as Girard thinks. The term degradation seems more comprehensive and more appropriate provided, of course, that the character of this degradation is specified in each particular analysis. It remains nonetheless that in bringing to light the

2. In Heidegger's thought as in Lukács', there is a radical rupture between Being (for Lukács, the totality) and all that one can speak of as either the indicative (judgment of fact) or the imperative (judgment of value). Heidegger designates this difference as that between the ontological and the ontic. And in this perspective, the metaphysical, one of the most elevated and most general forms of indicative thought, always remains in the ontic. Converging on the necessary distinction between the ontological and the ontic, between the totality and the theoretical, the moral, or the metaphysical, Heidegger and Lukács conceive their relationships in essentially different ways. As a philosophy of history, Lukács' thought implies the idea of a development of knowledge, a hope for progress and a risk of regression. But for Lukács, progress is the reconciliation of positive thought and the category of totality, of the regression, the remoteness of these two elements which are ultimately inseparable; the task of philosophy is precisely to introduce the category of totality as the foundation of all partial inquiries and all reflection on positive facts. Heidegger, on the other hand, establishes a radical (therefore abstract and conceptual) separation between Being and fact, between the ontological and the ontic, between philosophy and positive science, thus eliminating the entire idea of progress and regression. He also ends up with a philosophy of history, but it is an abstract philosophy with two dimensions—the authentic and the inauthentic, the opening of Being and the forgetfulness of Being. Thus, even if Girard's terminology comes from Heidegger, his introduction of the categories of progress and regression brings it close to Lukács' positions.

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category of mediation and even exaggerating its importance, Girard has specified the analysis of a structure which comprises not only the most important form of degradation characterizing the novel's world, but also probably the genetically primary form which gave birth to the literary genre of the novel, which consequently engendered other derivative forms of degradation.

With this starting point, Girard bases his typology primarily on the existence of two forms of mediation, external and internal. The first is characterized by the fact that the mediating agent is external to the world where the hero's quest unfolds (for example, the novels of chivalry in *Don Quixote*); the second by the fact that the mediating agent participates in that world (the lover in *l'Eternel Mari*). According to Girard, these two qualitatively different large groups contain the idea of a progression of degradation, manifested by the increasing distanciation between this character and *vertical transcendence.*

Let us examine in detail an essential point on which Lukács and Girard disagree fundamentally. As a history of a degraded search for authentic values in an inauthentic world, the novel is necessarily both biography and social chronicle; it is particularly important that in the novel the writer's situation in relation to the world he has created is different from that in all other literary forms. Girard call this particular situation *humor*; Lukács calls it *irony*. Both agree that the novelist must surpass (*dépasser*) his heroes' consciousness and that this surpassing (humor or irony) is aesthetically constitutive of novelistic creation. But they part company on the nature of this surpassing, and it is Lukács' position, not Girard's, which seems acceptable.

For Girard, at the moment when he writes his work the novelist lays aside the world of degradation to regain authenticity, the vertical transcendence. This is why Girard thinks that most great novels end with a conversion of the hero in this vertical transcendence and that the abstract character of certain endings (*Don Quixote, Le Rouge et le Noir*; also *La Princesse de Clèves*) is either an illusion of the reader or results from traces of the past surviving in the writer's consciousness. This affirmation is rigorously contrary to Lukács' aesthetics, in which any *literary form* (and any great artistic form in general) is born of the need to express an *essential* content. If novelistic degradation was truly surpassed by the writer and in the final conversion of a certain number of heroes, the history of this degradation would be only a news item and its expression would at best resemble a more or less amusing story.

Yet, the writer's irony, his autonomy in relation to his characters, and the final conversions of novel heroes are incontestable realities. Lukács thinks, however, that precisely to the extent that the novel is the imaginary creation of a world governed by *universal* degradation, this surpassing itself can only be degraded, *abstract*, conceptual, and not alive as concrete reality.

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According to Lukács, the novelist's irony bears not only on the hero, whose demonic character he knows, but also on the abstract character, which is thus also inadequate and degraded by its own consciousness. This is why the history of the demonic or idolatrous degraded search always remains the only possibility of explaining essential realities. The final conversion of Don Quixote or Julien Sorel is not, as Girard believes, the approach to authenticity, to vertical transcendence; it is simply the becoming aware (*prise de conscience*) of futility, of the character degraded not only by the former search but by all hope, by any possible search. This is why it is an end and not a beginning, and this irony (always self-irony) permits Lukács two connected definitions of this novel form which seem particularly auspicious: *the path has begun, the voyage had ended* and *the novel is the form of virile maturity*. As we have seen, this last formula more precisely defines educational novels like *Wilhelm Meister*, which ends in a self-limitation (renouncing the problematic search without, however, having either accepted the world of convention or abandoned the implicit scale of values).

Thus, in the meaning Lukács and Girard give it, the novel appears to be a literary genre in which authentic values, which are always what is in question, could not be present in the form of conscious characters or concrete realities. These values exist only in an abstract and conceptual form in the novelist's consciousness, where they assume an *ethical* character. But abstract ideas have no place in a literary work, where they constitute a heterogeneous element. The problem of the novel is then to make what is *abstract* and *ethical* in the novelist's consciousness into the essential element of a work where this reality can exist only in the form of a non-thematized (for Girard, mediated) absence or its equivalent, a degraded presence. As Lukács writes, the novel is the only literary genre where *the novelist's ethics become an aesthetic problem of the work*.

Sociologists of literature have always been preoccupied by the problem of a sociology of the novel without, it seems, their yet making a decisive step in its clarification. After all, since the novel was biography and social chronicle during the entire first part of its history, it has always been possible to show that the social chronicle more or less reflected the society of the period; it is not really necessary to be a sociologist to ascertain this. On the other hand, the transformation of the novel since Kafka has been related to the Marxist analysis of reification. Again, serious sociologists had to see a problem more than an explanation. If the absurd world of Kafka and of *The Stranger* by Camus, or Robbe-Grillet's world composed of relatively autonomous objects, clearly correspond to the analysis of reification developed by Marx and later Marxists, the problem is to know why, since this analysis was elaborated in the second half of the 19th century and concerns a phenomenon which appeared well before then, the same phenomenon appeared in the novel only after WWI. In short, all these analyses bore on

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the relation of certain elements of novels' content and on a social reality reflected almost without transposition, or by a more or less transparent transposition. But the very first problem confronting a sociology of the novel is the relationship between the *novel form* itself and the *structure* of the social milieu in which it developed; that is, between the novel as a literary genre and modern individualistic society. Although both were elaborated without specific sociological concerns, the union of Lukács' and Girard's analyses permits, if not a complete elucidation of this problem, at least a decisive step towards its elucidation.

The novel is characterized as a history of a degraded search for authentic values in a degraded society. As it concerns the hero, this degradation is manifested mainly in the process of mediation, the reduction of authentic values to the implicit level and their disappearance as manifest realities. From all evidence, it is a particularly complex structure and it would be difficult to imagine that it could have been born one day as one individual's invention with no basis in the social life of the group. It would be entirely incomprehensible, however, that a literary form of such dialectical complexity could be rediscovered through centuries by very dissimilar writers in very diverse countries to become the preeminent literary form expressing the content of an entire epoch, without there being either a homology or a significant relationship between that form and the most important aspects of social life.

Our hypothesis on this subject seems particularly simple and, above all, suggestive and reasonable—although it has taken years to find it. The novel form seems to be *the transformation on the literary plane of everyday life in individualistic society born of production for the market.* There is a *rigorous homology* between the literary form of the novel as we have just defined it following Lukács and Girard, and the everyday relationship of men with goods in general—and, by extension, of men with other men—in a society producing for the market.

In the natural, healthy relationship of men and goods, production is consciously regulated by future consumption, by the concrete qualities of objects: *use-value.* But what characterizes production for the market is, on the contrary, the elimination of this relationship in consciousness: its reduction to implicitness by the mediation of the new economic reality, *exchange-value,* created by this form of production. In other forms of society, when a man needed clothing or a house, he had to produce them himself or demand them from an individual capable of producing them, who had to or could furnish them, either under certain traditional rules or for reasons of authority, friendship, etc., or as a return for required services.[3] Today, obtaining clothing or a house means finding the money

3. As long as exchange remains *sporadic* because it is based only on excesses or because it has the character of an exchange of use-values which individuals or groups could not have

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necessary to buy them. The manufacturer of clothing or houses is indifferent to the use-values of the objects he produces. In his eyes, they are only an evil necessary to obtain the single object of his interest, sufficient exchange-value to assure the profitability of his enterprise. In economic life, which constitutes the most important part of modern social life, all authentic relations with the qualitative aspect of objects and beings, not only relations between men and things but also interhuman relations, tend to disappear and to be replaced by a mediated and degraded relationship with purely quantitative exchange-values. Naturally, use-values continue to exist and, in the final analysis, govern the whole economic sphere; but their action acquires an *implicit* character *exactly like that of authentic values in the novel's world.*

On the conscious and manifest plane, economic life is composed of people oriented exclusively toward exchange-values, degraded values to which, in production, some individuals are added—the creators in all fields—who remain oriented essentially toward use-values and who thus place themselves on the margin of society as *problematic individuals.* Naturally, unless they accept the romantic illusion (for Girard, delusion) of the *total* rupture between essence and appearance, between internal life and social life, they cannot delude themselves about the degradation their creative activity undergoes in a society producing for the market as soon as it is manifested externally as a book, a table, an education, a musical composition, etc., possessing a certain prestige and thus having a certain price. Also, as the final consumer, opposed in the very act of exchange to the producers, at certain moments of the day every individual in society producing for the market finds himself pursuing qualitative use-values which he can attain only through the mediation of exchange-values. Then, the creation of the novel as a literary genre was not surprising. The extremely complex form it represents in appearance is the one men live in every day, when they must search for every quality, every use-value, in a manner which is degraded by the mediation of quantity, exchange-value, in a society in which all effort to orient oneself *directly* toward use-value can only breed individuals degraded in a different way: *problematic individuals.*

Thus, the structures of an important novel genre and of exchange prove rigorously homologous to the point that one can speak of a single structure manifest on two different levels. Moreover, as we will see later, the *evolution* of the novel form corresponding to the world of reification can be understood only in relation to a *homologous history* of the structures of the latter. Before formulating some remarks on the subject of this homology of two evolutions, however, we must examine the particularly important sociological problem of the evolution in which the literary form was born of

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produced within an essentially natural economy, the mental structure of mediation does not appear or remains secondary. The fundamental transformation in the development of reification results from the advent of *production for the market.*

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the economic reality, and of the modifications that the study of this process obliges us to introduce into the traditional representation of the sociological conditioning of literary creation.

A primary fact is striking: the traditional scheme of literary sociology, Marxist or not, cannot be applied in the case of structural homology just mentioned. In fact, most work in literary sociology established a relationship between the most important literary works and the collective *consciousness* of whatever social group they came from. On this point, the traditional Marxist position did not differ essentially from the body of non-Marxist sociological works, in relation to which it introduced only four new ideas:

a) The literary work is not the simple reflection of a real and given collective consciousness but the result, at a deep level of coherence, of tendencies belonging to the consciousness of some group—a consciousness which must be conceived as a dynamic reality directed toward a certain equilibrium. Basically, what separates Marxist sociology from positivist, relativist, and eclectic sociological tendencies in this domain as in all others, is the fact that it sees the key concept not as *real* collective consciousness but as the ascribed (*zugerechnet*) concept of *possible consciousness*, which alone permits comprehension of the former.

b) The relationship between collective thought and great individual works of literature, philosophy, theology, etc., lies not in an identity of content but in a deeper coherence and a homology of structures which can be explained by imaginary contents very unlike the real content of collective consciousness.

c) The work corresponding to the mental structure of some social group can be elaborated in certain (admittedly very rare) cases by an individual with very little relationship to this group. The *social* character of the work lies above all in what an individual could never establish by himself—a coherent mental structure corresponding to a "world view." Such a structure can be elaborated only by a group; the individual can only push it to a very high degree of coherence and transpose it on the plane of imaginary creation, conceptual thought, etc.

d) Collective consciousness is neither a primary nor an autonomous reality; it is elaborated implicitly in the total behavior of individuals participating in economic life, social life, political life, etc.

These are extremely important theses sufficient to establish a great difference between Marxist thought and other conceptions of the sociology of literature. Nevertheless, despite these differences, the fact remains that, like positivist or relativist literary sociology, the Marxist theorists have always thought that social life could be explained on the literary, artistic, or philosophical levels only through the intermediary link of collective consciousness. But in the case we have just studied, what strikes us initially is that although we find a rigorous homology between the structures of

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economic life and a certain particularly important literary phenomenon, we cannot uncover any analogous structure on the level of *collective consciousness*, which heretofore seemed to be the intermediary link indispensible for realizing either the homology or an intelligible, significant relationship between the different aspects of social existence. The novel as analyzed by Lukács and Girard no longer seems to be the imaginary transposition of *conscious structures* of some particular group, but appears on the contrary to express (perhaps like a large part of modern art in general) a search for values which no social group effectively upholds and which economic life tends to render implicit for all members of society.

The old Marxist thesis, which saw the proletariat as the only social group which could serve as the basis of a new culture because it was not integrated into the reified society, began from the traditional sociological model that all authentic and important cultural creation can be born only from a fundamental agreement between the mental structure of the creator and that of a partial group which is broad or narrow but has universal aims. In reality, for Western society at least, the Marxist analysis has proved insufficient. The Western proletariat, far from remaining estranged in the reified society and opposing it as a revolutionary force, is on the contrary largely integrated in it; its trade union and political activity, far from overthrowing this society and replacing it with a socialist world, has permitted it to assure itself a relatively better position than Marx foresaw. But nonetheless, cultural creation has not ceased, even though it is increasingly menaced by reified society. Novels, perhaps like modern poetic creation and contemporary painting, are an authentic form of cultural creation not linked to the consciousness—even the possible consciousness—of a particular social group.

Before entering on the study of the process which permitted and produced this *direct* transposition of economic life into literary life, let us establish that, if such a process seems to contradict the whole tradition of Marxist studies of cultural creation, on the other hand, it unexpectedly confirms one of the most important Marxist analyses of bourgeois thought: the theory of commodity fetishism and reification. This analysis, which Marx considered one of his most important discoveries, affirmed that in societies producing for the market (that is, in the types of society where economic activity predominates) collective consciousness progressively loses all active reality and tends to become a simple reflection[4] of economic life and, ultimately, to disappear.

4. We speak of a "consciousness-reflection" since the content of this consciousness and the ensemble of relationships between the different elements of this content (its structure) sustain the activity of certain other domains of social life without in turn acting on them. In practice, this situation has probably never been reached in real capitalist society. It created, however, a tendency toward the rapid and progressive diminution of the action of consciousness on economic life and, inversely, toward the continual growth of the action of the economic sector of social life on the content and structure of consciousness.

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Thus, from all evidence there was not contradiction but incoherence between this *particular* analysis of Marx's and later Marxists' theory of literary and philosophical creation, which implied an active role for collective consciousness. This latter theory never envisioned the consequences for literary sociology of Marx's affirmation that in societies producing for the market a radical modification of the status of individual and collective consciousness unexpectedly occurs along with an implicit modification of the relations between the infrastructure and the superstructure. The analysis of reification first elaborated by Marx on the plane of everyday life, then developed by Lukács as it concerns philosophical, scientific, and political thought, finally taken up by a certain number of theorists in different particular fields, and on which we have published a study,[5] thus proves to be true, for the moment at least, as confirmed by the facts in the sociological analysis of a certain novel form.

That said, the question arises how the connection is made between economic structures and literary manifestations in a society where this connection lies *outside collective consciousness*. On this subject we have formulated a hypothesis of the convergent action of four different factors:

a) The birth in the thinking of members of bourgeois society, beginning in economic behavior and the existence of exchange-value, of the *category of mediation* as the fundamental and increasingly more developed form of thought, with the implicit tendency to replace this thought with a false total consciousness in which the mediating value becomes absolute value and the mediated value disappears entirely: or, in clearer language, the tendency to think of the approach to all values from the viewpoint of the mediation—the propensity to make money and social prestige the absolute values and not the simple mediations assuring the approach to other, qualitative values.

b) The subsistence in this society of a certain number of individuals who are essentially *problematic* to the extent that their thinking and behavior remains dominated by qualitative values, although they are unable to preserve them entirely from the degrading mediation, whose influence pervades the whole social structure. Among these individuals are, in the first place, all creators—writers, artists, philosophers, theologians, men of action, etc., whose thought and behavior are governed above all by the quality of their work without their being able to escape entirely the influence of the market or the reception of the reified society.

c) No important work can be the expression of a purely individual experience; the novel genre could probably be born and develop only to the extent that a *non-conceptualized* emotional discontent, an emotional aspiration aimed directly at qualitative values, developed either in the whole society or perhaps only among the middle classes, from which most

5. "La Reification" in *Recherches dialectiques* (Gallimard, 1961).

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novelists came.[6]

d) Finally, in liberal societies producing for the market there was a set of values which, without being trans-individual, nevertheless had a universal aim and general validity within these societies. These were the values of liberal individualism linked to the very existence of the competitive market (liberty, equality, and property in France; *Bildungsideal* in Germany; and their derivatives of tolerance, the rights of man, development of the personality, etc.). From these values the category of the *individual* biography developed and became the constitutive element of the novel, where it nonetheless took the form of the *problematic* individual, beginning from

1) The personal experience of problematic individuals mentioned above in point b);

2) The internal contradiction between individualism as a universal value created by bourgeois society and the important and trying limitations produced in reality by this society on the possibilities of individual development.

This hypothetical scheme seems confirmed for one thing by the fact that ever since one of these four elements—individualism—disappeared in the transformation of economic life and the replacement of the economy of free competition by an economy of cartels and monopolies (beginning at the end of the 19th century; most economists situate the qualitative turning point between 1900 and 1910), we have witnessed a parallel transformation of the novel form which resulted in the progressive dissolution and disappearance of the individual character, the hero. This transformation can be characterized very schematically in two periods:

a) The first, transitory period, when the disappearance of the individual's importance entailed attempts to replace biography as the content of the novel with values born of different ideologies. For if in Western societies these values proved too weak to engender their own literary forms, they could eventually have served to mortgage an existing form which was losing its old content. On this plane are, in the first place, the ideas of community

6. A problem arises here that has been difficult to solve up to now, which we may be able to resolve some day by concrete sociological research: the collective emotional and non-conceptual "fund of resonance" which permitted the development of the novel form.

We originally thought that reification, while tending to dissolve and integrate different partial groups into the total society, removing their specificity up to a point, is so contrary to the biological and psychological reality of the individual human being that in *all* human beings it must to some degree engender reactions of opposition (or, if degraded in a qualitatively more advanced way, reactions of evasion), thus creating a diffuse resistance to the reified world which will constitute the background of novelistic creation.

Along the way, however, it appeared that there was an uncontrolled *a priori* supposition of the existence of a biological nature whose external manifestations could not be entirely denatured by social reality. But it may just as well be that resistances to reification, even emotional ones, were circumscribed in certain particular social classes, which must define positive research.

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and collective reality (institutions, family, social group, revolution, etc.) introduced and developed in Western thought by socialist ideology.

b) The second period, which begins close to Kafka, extends up to the yet unfinished contemporary new novel and is characterized by the abandonment of all attempts to replace the problematic hero and individual biography by another reality, and by the effort to write a novel of the subject's absence, of the non-existence of all progressive search.[7]

This content is undoubtedly connected to the content of the traditional novel (which was always the literary form of the problematic search and the absence of positive values). But is is nevertheless essentially different (the question is now to eliminate two essential elements from the specific content of the novel: the psychology of the problematic hero and the story of his demonic search). The attempt to safeguard the novel form by giving it this content must, of course, at the same time create parallel orientations toward different forms of expression. Perhaps there are some elements here for a sociology of the theater of absence (Beckett, Ionesco, Adamov during a certain period) and also of certain aspects of non-figurative painting.

Let us finally mention one last problem which could and must give rise to later investigations. The novel form we have just studied is essentially critical and oppositional. It is a form of resistance to developing bourgeois society. This individual resistance could depend, in a group, only on *emotional and non-conceptualized* psychic processes precisely because conscious resistances, which could have elaborated literary forms involving the possibility of a positive hero (in the first place, the oppositional proletarian consciousness Marx hoped for and predicted), were not sufficiently developed in Western societies. The novel of the problematic hero thus proves to be true, contrary to traditional opinion, as a literary form tied to the history and development of the bourgeoisie, but one which is not the expression of the real or possible consciousness of that class.

But the problem arises whether, parallel to this literary form, other forms corresponding to the conscious values and real aspirations of the bourgeoisie did not develop. On this point we mention, as a totally general and hypothetical suggestion, the possibility that Balzac's work—whose structure must first be precisely analyzed—made up the sole great literary expression of the universe structured by conscious bourgeois values: the individualism, thirst for power, money, and eroticism which overcame the old feudal values of altruism, charity, and love. Sociologically, if it proved exact, this hypothesis could be linked with the fact that Balzac's work is

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7. Lukács characterized the period of the traditional novel by the proposition: "The path is begun, the journey is ended." One could characterize the new novel by the suppression of the first half of this expression. Its time can be characterized either by the expression, "The aspiration is there but the journey is finished" (Kafka, Sarraute), or simply by saying that "the journey is already finished, although the path was never begun" (the first three novels of Robbe-Grillet).

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situated precisely in an age when individualism, itself ahistorical, structured the consciousness of a bourgeoisie which was constructing a new society and which found itself at the highest and most intense level of its real historical efficacy.

In passing, it must also be asked why, with the exception of this unique case, this novel form had only a secondary importance in the history of Western culture, why in the 19th and 20th centuries the real consciousness and aspirations of the bourgeoisie no longer succeeded in creating their own literary form at the same level as the other forms of great Western literature. On this point, let us put forth several totally general hypotheses. The preceding analysis extends to one of the most important novel forms an affirmation that seems valuable now for almost all forms of *authentic cultural creation*. The only exception we saw for the moment is the work of Balzac,[8] who could create a large literary world structured by purely individualistic values at ahistorical moments when men animated by these ahistoric values were generating a considerable historical upheaval (which, fundamentally, was achieved in France only with the end of the bourgeois revolution in 1848).

With this exception (it may still be necessary to add some other singular exceptions which we are not thinking of at the moment), it seems that valuable literary and artistic creations come only where there is the aspiration to surpass the individual, and the search for qualitative trans-individual values. "Man becomes man": this slight modification of Pascal's text means that man can be authentic only to the extent that he conceives or feels himself as part of a group in development and places himself in a historical or transcendent trans-individual dimension. But bourgeois thought, linked like bourgeois society itself to the existence of economic activity, is precisely the first thought in history that is simultaneously radically profane and ahistorical. It is the first thought which tends to deny everything sacred, be it the heavenly sacred of transcendent religions or the immanent sacred of the historical future. This seems to be the fundamental reason why bourgeois society created the first radically unaesthetic form of consciousness. Its extreme expressions, rationalism—the essence of bourgeois thought—ignores the very existence of art. There is no Cartesian or Spinozian aesthetic; and even for Baumgarten art is only an inferior form of knowledge.

It is no accident, then, that with the exception of several particular situations we find no great literary manifestations of bourgeois

8. A year ago, dealing with the same problems and mentioning the novel of the problematic hero and the novelistic sub-literature of the positive hero, we wrote, "We conclude this article on the large question of the sociological study of Balzac's work. This seems to constitute a novel form in itself which integrates some important elements of the two types of novel we have mentioned and probably represents the most important novelistic manifestation in history." The present remarks try to specify the hypothesis hinted in these lines.

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consciousness proper. In a society linked to the market the artist is, as we have said, a problematic being, which means he is critical of and opposed to society.

Nevertheless, reified bourgeois thought had its thematic values, some of which were authentic like those of individualism, some purely conventional (which Lukács called false consciousness and, in their extreme forms, bad faith). Thematized in collective consciousness, these stereotypes must have been able to create beside the authentic novel form a parallel literature also telling an individual story and, since it concerns conceptualized values, naturally capable of including a positive hero.

It would be interesting to follow the meanderings of these secondary novel forms based naturally on collective consciousness. Although we have not yet studied it, this might lead to an extremely varied scale, from the lowest forms, like Delly's, to the highest, which might be found in writers like Alexandre Dumas or Eugène Sue. Perhaps we should also situate on this plane, parallel to the new novel, certain very successful works linked to new forms of collective consciousness.

Whatever the case, the extremely schematic outline we have traced here seems capable of furnishing the framework of a sociological study of the novel form. This study is more important to the extent that, outside its proper object it can contribute significantly to the study of the psychic structures of certain social groups, especially the middle classes.

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An Unfinished Conversation: Two Oppressed People Unable to Agree

by Pedro Cavalcanti and Rubem Fernandes

Authors' note: This dialogue is obviously imaginary. A youth from Eastern Europe, Jozef, confronts a young Latin American, Jose, as each is understood by the authors. They could be a Czech and a Dominican, both from countries occupied by foreign troops in the recent past, or they could be a Pole and a Brazilian. The questions raised in this dialogue come from specific socialist traditions. But José and Józef don't exhaust the positions they represent and their perspectives don't comprehend the variety of standpoints socialism presents today. We are sure that an African or a North American youth would introduce different problems and other approaches to socialism. Our characters could be meeting inside a Café in Kurfurstendamm, in West Berlin, José on his way to a socialist country, so he thinks, in order to continue his studies that the dictatorship in his country curtailed, as well as to better prepare himself ideologically for his return when the time will come; Józef would be on his way out, going to some developed western capitalist society to enjoy, so he believes, the benefits of widely available consumer goods and especially looking for the virtues of free speech. Or, another possibility, they could both be in exile in Paris, José being very radical to the point that he refuses the aid of the "reformist ally," if not an enemy more to his cause. They might meet by chance, let us imagine, sometime before two o'clock in a Cafe in the Boulevard St. Michel, or around St. Germain, both waiting, in different moods, for the daily edition of Le Monde *to come out. José is hopeful about possible transformations in his continent being reported in the news, Józef is skeptical and merely tries to follow changes, if any, in the bureaucracy of his country. José and Józef are not "ideal types" of any determined position. They illustrate perspectives of revolution among many perspectives that each area has created or has seen developed within its countries. While we, the authors, are unable to bring their views into any kind of satisfactory agreement, we hope that dialogues such as the one presented here can at least help to clarify some of the dilemmas our historical generation has faced. The authors want also to declare at this point that they have no pretensions that questions coming from socialist traditions are the only ones worthy of attention.*

José: Would you mind if I sat here?

Józef: On, no! Please do.

(*As usual, the exchange of a few casual phrases is enough to provoke that one question which is already too boring or too involved to answer.*)

José: Do you want to go back to your country?

Józef: Well, to tell you the truth, I have broken the law in my country. The political situation became unbearable to me, and to many friends. The police

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kept harassing me because of my struggle against the dictatorship and so I have chosen to escape. There was not much else I could do.

José: Then we are brothers, for I am in the same position. The police of my country are probably still looking for me. I come from Latin America.

Józef: Let me tell you that I distrust and fear "brotherhoods." Let's be cousins instead...

José: Ha! Okay, "compañero." You know, that is how we call ourselves.

Józef: That may be even worse. Listen, any time we try to change anything our countries are occupied or threatened by the troops of men who call us "brothers" and "comrades." They claim to defend the "international interests" of the working class, although they shoot at our workers. I'd rather not have that large a family...

José: Look, for me this is essential. Either my struggle is just and for all men, or it is not. These invaders are liars. True Internationalism upholds the autonomy of all peoples. But I must tell you that some of the changes proposed in your countries sound like a sheer return to capitalism.

Józef: As to your last remark I absolutely refuse to answer. It just shows how powerful their propaganda machine is. Look, there was a time when people in our countries also believed in the fundamental brotherhood of all the oppressed. During the last war, for instance, after the defeat of the Nazis in Stalingrad (or shall I say Volvograd?), we gave in to dreaming and fighting for a new, completely different world to come. That was a long time ago. Later, in order to be radical, that is, to break with conciliatory illusions, I had to change my grand ideas. I grant you that at times different nations or classes meet in a way which seems to indicate an identity of interests. But today I maintain that there has never been one class or movement in history, no one political program, no one method of analysis which really overcomes the antagonism between particular and universal interests.

Take nationalism, for instance. We understand that for you in Latin America the struggle for national autonomy is bound up with internationalism. It is obvious, for example, that the aspirations of Cuba at the moment feed on and depend on the hopes and the solidarity of the revolutionary world. At times of intense pressure of American imperialism, the more unconditionally "Cuban" you are, the more internationalist you become. But that is not true for us. The maintenance of a supra-national political system has for many years channeled the fruits of our labor for every purpose except that of our people's welfare. Socialism cannot forever deny our workers the products of their work. Today, keeping faith with my people requires a reduction in some of our international commitments. Not to mention that a good slice of this solidarity only serves to expand the Soviet Union's areas of influence, rather than serving the people of your countries.

Let me be clear about this: we do not reject internationalism. We do reject, however, the claim that for true revolutionaries the interests of their people are identical with those of all peoples and that their first loyalty must be given

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to universal commitments. In other words, we deny that the revolution can overcome the contradictions between nationalism and internationalism.

José: You are being short-sighted. You do not see that the present contradictions, something we do not deny, are the product of existing oppressive systems. The identity of interests of which we speak will be the reality of the new world we must build on the foundation of our present possibility to unite. Today's sacrifices are the price for the future reconciliation of all peoples. You talk about your countries and Socialism. Do you really believe your countries are socialist? As far as we are concerned what you have is State Capitalism, a dictatorship of bureaucrats who use the State as a means for the accumulation of privileges. Call it Stalinism if you want, as the bourgeois press does. If your countries were really socialist your argument would not stand because your people would have been educated in true Internationalism. Besides, you have to understand that the working class of any country is objectively internationalist.

Józef: I would not dispute the label "State Capitalism" if I did not suspect it to be a cover for ideological stubborness. It is easier to invent names for things than to learn from adverse experience. You forget too fast the past of your own movement. These bureaucratic States were the creation of a genuine socialist leadership. No politicians in history were ever so self-conscious of their task. No revolution was ever so thoroughly planned. And, by the way, none produced results so far apart from the original intentions. But you explain these results away and keep repeating the old Bolsheviks' rhetoric. You relate to them as if they had never done anything besides writing books. Have you thought that with this "State Capitalism" of yours you could be voicing an ideological apology for the vested interests acquired by the new rulers?

Take also, for instance, this business about a reality which you call "objective" although it cannot be found amidst the facts of present life. This reality, and its "objectivity", is not here yet, nevertheless, for you, it must be already obeyed. Who are you in fact obeying when this kind of mere speculation becomes socially effective? No, my dear fellow, we deny any political organization the right to claim for itself the position of the exclusive and inevitable representative of the future.

The "new world" of the future is a dream to be pursued, but the sacrifices we accept and demand of others now are costly in human sweat. No wonder that our "dreams" diverge, nor is it difficult to see the egotism which taints them. But my vision is more profound because it takes into account my own one-sidedness; while yours is blind to the justified aspirations which it discards. Your beautiful "new world" is monopolistic. It seeks to be all comprehensive, but it excludes values which are equally as important as yours.

My metaphysics promises less than yours. It asserts quite plainly the recurrence of the same basic human conflicts after each new attempt to overcome them; but it destroys less.

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José: You hide a traditional ideological position, very traditional indeed, behind "a sophisticated philosophical screen." I cannot accept a view at this time of History, which has History forever going around in circles. I reject a metaphysics of natural conflicts. This is so old!

Józef: And I will not swallow a History which moves upward towards a "promised land." I reject a metaphysics of Progress. It is funny, you accusing me of being "metaphysical." Look at you and your vision of socialism. My country ceases to be socialist because it presents features that diverge from your ideal. This is religious, dogmatic thought: socialism is always good, what is bad becomes capitalism. The name for this is Manichaeanism!

José: Do not think I am naive. I know that Socialism—and any society as a matter of fact—will always carry contradictions: this is dialectical, it is historical. And there are very basic things that, for us, make your society very far from Socialism. A Socialism where the working class has no control of the means of production, directly or indirectly, since your parties are nothing but bureaucracies, in short, where producers do not exercise power, is not what we understand as Socialism, everything we fight for. This point is essential for us but there are many other things that I could mention to show how far you are from Socialism. A "socialism" full of privileges, with no mass participation, without freedom for criticism, is that Socialism? But let's drop that for a while. The question I want to put forward is this: why do you struggle? Is there any reason to risk everything just to achieve a change in the terms of the problem? Revolution only makes sense if it brings a fundamental break with the past. We want nothing less than a new man and we promise nothing less than a new world! As a matter of fact, it is not a promise. We can guarantee the new society that will come—a classless, just society. Socialism is not a dream. It is a consequence of historical evolution. You know that we are ending the pre-history of mankind. In the new world things, and man, will be completely different from what they are today. We cannot see how you can think of the future with present, old categories.

Józef: I am tormented by the fact that I want to agree and to disagree with you at the same time. We know full well that a break with the present sufferings and wants will only come about under the pressure of men inspired by radical hopes. For the revolutionary, it seems necessary to divide the world into two spheres: a sphere of evil and a realm of justice and freedom to come. A belief in Utopia seems to be both indispensable and inevitable to revolution. You cannot imagine how we dream of democracy under socialism. Years of ideological, bureaucratic, and police totalitarianism has reduced the public sphere to a collective falsehood. This is why a simple demand for freedom of the press has the impact of dynamite. Only by force will we achieve the right to organize authentically and to strike, not to mention the goal of workers' control. Make no mistake about it, we are talking about revolution in its most profound sense.

On the other hand, our utopia suffers from a very basic ambiguity: the

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evils we want to fight are those created precisely by a revolutionary "utopia" which has come to power, which is changing society, but which cannot be consistent with its first intentions. We are faced with the oppressive side of "utopia." It is ironic, but in a sense we also dream of the ultimate revolution of history: one which is directed against the demonic dimension of revolution itself. And because of this I must dispute your statements.

No, a social movement does not have the right to risk everything. It cannot be done anyway. There are no limits to the possible evil, there is always something important to be lost. Those who lived in the concentration camps know this, and the Vietnamese will yet have much to tell us in this regard. Those who see only heroism in struggle have the emotional maturity of Hollywood. Heroism and misery go hand in hand.

Nor is the concept of negation sufficient to define the revolutionary action. After many years of socialism, more than half a century in Soviet Union, it is the continuity, not the break with the past, which impresses us most. Once actualized, the revolutionary project reveals its historical origins. "Utopia" consists not only of the new against the old, but also of the old which reorganizes itself and continues within the new. We have discovered to our dismay that people who describe our social evils as mere "remnants" of the pre-socialist systems do not want to be radical in relation to our society. It is not simply the old within the new which oppresses us, nor is it simply the premature aging of the new; it is also the very, very old. It was not only the technologized Red Army which attacked Czechoslovakia in August 1968, it was also the "holy Russia" of the czars.

For us revolution is not a mere "change in the terms of the problem" but it is not total rupture with the past either. In one sense, all historical revolutions are contemporaneous: in their present enemies they re-encounter all the oppressors of the past; and revolutionaries would certainly discover more enemies to combat if they were aware of all the motives underlying their own actions.

José: You mistake confusion for wisdom. Your proposal is a contradiction in terms: you want a square circle, a non-revolutionary revolution! I cannot see how you can attribute to our socialist revolution today the denomination of utopia. I decisively reject it! The time of utopian socialists has passed long ago. It is back in the nineteenth century. Today we are in possession of Marxism, scientific Marxism. We have a scientific explanation of History and society. This has nothing to do with utopia. You keep pointing out the possible evils or injustices of revolutionary times. Of course a revolution and the building of a new society is not a smooth, orderly process. Those who want it this way will never live long enough to see such a revolution. This is a phenomenon nobody will ever experience! But so far you are much more concerned with possible mistakes we can make in our future than with the exploitation of the present. What about the monstrous injustices of today, the starvation of millions of people, the oppressive regimes of capitalism?

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Go and see our misery, our slums, our beggars in the streets, our peasants living on a subsistence level, dying like animals any time a drought comes, our sick children, fat because of illness, our people old when they reach thirty, our girls prostituted so that they can eat, the human degradation of our illiterate men. What do you know about these things? Do you think I am dramatizing? Well, it is dramatic! Do you believe you can realize any of these realities? *This is our capitalism*! Now, should we only support the revolutionary struggles of those who can guarantee your future paradise? Oh, no, you are the utopian, not me. Are you demanding from us, from all of us who are in jail, who saw comrades and sincere, honest, idealist non-Marxist people shot or killed by torture, that we stop our action to overthrow and destroy our enemies unless we can know for sure that no injustices will be committed in the revolutionary process? You are not only a philosophical idealist but completely ahistorical. Look, friend, I sympathize with you and understand some of your problems, but let me tell you: you are confused, you cannot see the basic contradictions of the world today!

Jõzef: Thank you for your sympathy, but it is not confusion that threatens me. It is paralysis. It may be possible to say "yes" and "no" at the same time, but it is not possible to practice them simultaneously. It is not difficult to overcome the verbal contradiction: you need only remember that the word revolution has more than one meaning. When people sit around a table, it is easy to compromise at a theoretical level, or to believe, in a way, that we agree. But in action the choice of one path excludes for good the possibilities entailed by a different choice. We are not merely concerned with "mistakes" and eventual "injustices." These are painful enough, but they refer to errors committed inside a framework which is generally accepted. However, it is the intolerance built into the revolutionary framework itself which we reject. It assumes that the policies of the ruling party or social group must be identical with the interests of the whole society. In this framework, the legitimacy of one political force excludes all the others as illegitimate. It equates opposition with crime. Once you accept that there is one policy which should of necessity be accepted by all, every dissent must be understood as an offense against all. The tribunals become the proper place to handle political disagreement, and the judges themselves become representatives of the disputing factions. In the end, might is what defines right. This is historical, not ahistorical as you said. You may need "to believe" in order to risk your life during your struggles. Otherwise, if you doubt, how can you put your neck at stake? But let me tell you this: people with doubts, with my views, without any utopias, have given their lives in our countries to change our socialism. I hope you see now why tolerance and a new sort of pluralism are fundamental to my vision of socialism. Our revolution is to break with this "revolutionary" scheme which revives the intolerance typical of the old religious authorities. Perhaps it is difficult for you to understand, but where we live this kind of

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project is an explosive thing. Some people are willing to die for it; the Government is prepared to torture us to prevent it.

José: And I say that it is not paralysis that threatens you but reaction. Your alleged realism is nothing but conservatism. Your "tolerance" and "pluralism" are bourgeois demands already obsolete even in the capitalist world. Technological development has made possible a comfortable dictatorship called Technocracy, in which the citizens are called upon only to decide among different brands of the same stuff (some vote for Colgate, others for Pepsodent), the interest groups fight over the scraps, and a handful of anonymous men make all the really important decisions. You dream of a democracy which is already the object of derision in the countries of its origins. You dream of bourgeois democracy. Either your isolation makes it difficult for you to see what is happening to liberalism, to the capitalism of our times, or you are conditioned by the ideology of the industrial elite which European socialism has created, although you probably reject this interpretation of mine. But your goal sounds like nothing more than a socialist technocracy. Moreover, your emphasis on liberalizing the economy and in increasing the production of consumer goods betrays your non-proletarian leanings. It reflects your class origin. You will end up by producing the same pasteurized and technicolor trash which Western society consumes and is consumed by. You are already making Coca-Cola, aren't you? When do Chiclets go into production?

Józef: Listen, the antiseptic hedonism of the consumer society repels me. After all, my tastes are not unaffected by my recent aristocratic past. . . just to answer your simplisitc "class analysis." We also want a man who is his own master, and above all, master of his own hands. But the way you talk forces me to turn your own accusation against you. You are the one who is non-proletarian. You can afford to despise consumer goods because you have access to them. The yearning for simplicity is the nostalgia of the rich.

José: Here we are: your vision of the world is so narrow-minded, so Eurocentric, that you think all capitalist countries are developed, consumer societies. You even dare accuse me of richness! I am personally privileged, of course, by the mere fact of being a student in a country where 50% of the population is illiterate. But to stop these privileges, and the exploitation and oppression that maintain this situation is exactly the core of our fight. We want to liberate the Third World, or the underdeveloped countries as you call us here, as if this underdevelopment were not the consequence of centuries of European exploitation. You, too—a "socialist citizen"—profit from the military puppets imperialism puts in government to oppress our people. Do you know that you trade with us regardless of who is in government? Do you know that your trade with us is based on the prices of the international market, the prices dictated by the big imperialist corporations?

Józef: It is not as simple as you say. Besides, I am not responsible for the dealings of our governments. Remember, we don't choose them. But we, as a people, do aid the progressive governments of your countries.

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José: Oh, yes. When it serves some of your interests for getting a better position to deal with the imperialist powers. You help Cuba so you can threaten the United States with missiles and later withdraw them over the heads of the Cubans, without even consulting them. You help the Arabs, of course, and thus you keep your hands close to their natural resources. The purposes of your solidarity are different from ours.

Józef: You are identifying me with my oppressors in power. Let me continue.

José: I am not identifying you with your ruling class. But it is a fact that you all hate it when you export goods that we pay for in dollars...

Józef: It is not true that they are all paid for in hard currency. We establish deals exchanging products in a way that is profitable for both sides.

José: The point here is to know what is the price we pay for this merchandise. The prices of your products keep going up while our products' exchange value constantly goes down, determined by the imperialist market prices in order to serve political interests and the exploitation we suffer. You cannot deny that! Objectively, you participate in our exploitation! You, just like your governments, if in power, would continue to sell weapons, those which do not threaten your relationship with imperialism—your beautiful "peaceful coexistence"—to our liberation movements. What kind of "revolutionaries" are those who "sell" weapons to oppressed people?

Józef: Listen, the question of helping the liberation movements, that I heartily support, is very complex. It involves...

José: You accuse me of "simplifying" things. Well, for you the obvious things are "complex." Let us get one thing very clear: we help you, you don't help us! As much as we help the developed capitalist economies, and all industrialized countries as a matter of fact. Thanks to our exploitation you can all keep a high level of economic living—because it is high only in the economic level, nothing else. We also help your countries when we attack imperialism. The Vietnamese people helped you—and all of us. We did not help them! And some of your economies would not stand a chance if it weren't for the cheap raw materials you take from us. Realistically, some of you cannot export anything but know-how, also acquired due to our exploitation. Please, at least have these things clearly in your mind.

Józef: I have. But...

José: Then don't make a pure rational thing out of it. Be consequential. Try to incorporate them in your perspective. What about you having a real *world* view, not only a European one?

Józef: Come on, you are the one who cancels us and the socialist experiences from your considerations, your "revolutionary" world view. You are a short-sighted person of the worst kind. Your perspectives are purposely geographically limited. You are the one who is ahistorical! Will you let me continue my discourse on the economy?

José: I am listening. Let us see how much the Third World...

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Józef: I bet you are. As I was saying, our demands for investment in consumer goods have to do with the fact that life is lived and valued not by the quantity of sheet metal produced but by small things. If it is Man you have in mind, as you probably claim, you must transform the day-to-day details of life. Man is not an abstraction. The matter of liberalizing the market is complicated, I know. We disagree among ourselves concerning the optimum degree of central planning (obviously more than in a capitalist system), and the relationship between liberalization and workers' control on one side and planning on the other...

José: I don't see why you put workers' control on one side and planning on the other. Workers' control *is* planning because it is in the interests of the working class to have a planned economy.

Józef: You are pure as an angel! Can't you see that if you have workers' control, real, concrete, today workers' control, you automatically jeopardize the possibilities of central planning? Do you think that deciding at a mass level whether to reinvest or to distribute "the profit" is an idyllic process? Do you believe that people in each single factory or production unit, pressed by their own individual problems and needs and—let us not forget—with limited knowledge, will decide to reinvest because it is for the good of society? No, they may reinvest because they are forced to by the central planning administration or because they foresee larger profits to come in the future. Yes, there is a contradiction between workers' control as the basis of society and national planning of the economy. The question for economic democracy is how to mediate this concrete, practical conflict in the best terms for the whole society and for the cause of people's own control of their production. Democratic societies are not idealistic dreams, it is a problem of...

José: It is amazing how you despise the people, the mass as you said. You are taking your people, your working class educated in the false ideology of identifying more economic goods as the goal of socialism as people everywhere and ever. Again you just confirmed being an ahistorical idealist. Can't you see that this mass you are talking about is corrupted by the bourgeois ideology of profit? A revolutionary people, formed through a process of difficult revolutionary struggle will not behave in this selfish, individualistic manner you are describing. But your assumptions exclude this possibility, right?

Józef: The "people" seem to be for you always good, pure, well intentioned. I tell you, every people is a product of its historical experiences, with beautiful features and horrible prejudices. Otherwise, how come your working class, "objectively revolutionary," does not perform this role all the time, does not behave according to your ideals, "its" ideals, you would say?

José: Come on, don't tell me you don't know what false consciousness is! You...

Józef: You know, the more I think, I really cannot see how a consciousness

José: Please be serious! You are not a revolutionary, you can't even reason by using basic concepts.

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Józef: Let us leave "classifications" aside for a moment. Do you have any doubt that liberalization is the only way to destroy economic bureaucracy? Please, allow me to discourse a little bit on this matter. You cannot imagine the oppression caused by inefficiency in modern society. I swear to you that we have never solved a problem or bought a damn thing without waiting in line for it. Aesthetic pleasure in goods of common use is denied us: most things we have are ugly and carelessly made. From every side, bureaucratic irrationality swamps us. There is something insufferable about the way factories produce tape recorders, for instance, year after year, when you can't buy a tape anywhere in the country for months at a time. One day the tapes appear, everyone rushes to the stores. . . and then they are gone again. Every single item is the subject of administrative decision (whether or not to produce it, when to produce it, how many to produce and what to charge for it) in thousands of offices, by incompetent people, and who knows how many reports. The result of that is scarcity and waste combined. Bureaucratic inefficiency opens an abyss between work and the product of that work and flouts people's needs. If you want to see alienated labor, go and look at our factories, dear "comrade"!

I know of only two ways to regulate supply and demand in an industrial society: administratively or through the market. The second involves money and reification; but the first alternative is worse because it is less able to open up a place for products which have creative value. You do not find much room for an independent sub-culture or individual initiative in an all planned society, do you know? A central planning of everything, of every detail, on an administrative level, results in our daily personal life becoming also planned, routinized, by the force of things. That, with its counterpart on the political level—that brutal, mediocre dictatorship—leads everything to absurdity. It all ends up in stagnation! Have you noticed by any chance that almost everything new and creative in the arts and social sciences comes from where the left can manifest itself, from your decadent "liberal" countries?

Even those who hold power are beginning to see this, due to the stagnation of our economies, and they are now introducing economic reforms for which they previously sent us to jail as "revisionists" for demanding. Beginning in 1966, Hungary has introduced a more radical economic reform than the one announced in Czechoslovakia. East Germany has also moved in this direction, and the Polish and the Soviet leaders are discussion the same thing. Make no mistake: they are all going to make these reforms, because they have no other choice. But they are going to impose them from *above, without any transformation of the power structure. They* are the ones who want a technocracy, an efficient hierarchical power structure. We struggle for democratization of socialism, from the factory to the highest centers of power. That is why we see in East Germany the extreme example of our internal enemy, in spite of the fact that it has achieved a much higher level of consumer goods production than elsewhere. Together with the cars, it produces the toughest of all repressions we suffer.

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If you tried to understand these things, you would probably comprehend why people continue to run away in spite of "improvements" they may introduce at the level of consumption. That is why it is so difficult to get a passport in our countries and...

José: Even without refuting some of your affirmations my argument stands. You ignore the problems of the so-called society of abundance, where oppression is correlated not with scarcity...

Józef: I did not say that. At least...

José: Just a moment! Now it is your turn to listen to me. As I was saying, there you have an oppression which is not correlated with scarcity but with the vulgarity of what people have and want, where the problem is not the failure to meet people's needs, but the distortion of those needs where artificiality conceals the absence of creativity and power. This also has to do with details of the everyday life. Thus...

Józef: I admit that, and I admit that I don't have much to say about it. We have held meetings and we have tried to publish material discussing possible alternative models to the North American patterns of consumption. But the ideological poverty imposed on our people and the frustrations of so many years leave us with little defense against the impact of the West; and we can no longer bear our cultural isolation.

José: Please, let me go on. But, even more, as I was reasoning, I don't agree with your formulation of the problem, the so-called inherent antagonism between workers' control and planning the economy. It only exists because of you own concerns with consumption, your worries about the economy. That is why you want to solve your problems at the market level, as if the relationships of production were an economic issue only. They are social relationships; they include a whole spectrum of attitudes which are joined in the totalities which are the classes. It wonders me how you, a thorough revisionist, can be so mechanistic, so poorly "Marxist." If the people participated in power, their motives would be other than they are in your static model. If you want more democracy, this is a political problem; you have to solve it at the political level. The liberalization of the economy would only reinforce individualism, selfishness, each individual looking for his own interest. This is not democracy, at least not a new, socialist democracy. What you have "to liberalize" is the political structure, to allow the working class to participate, to be the subject of the decisions to be taken. At that time, then, you will see real class consciousness blossoming, social interest predominate against the particular interests of petit-bourgeois groups, remnants of the old capitalist order. Your so-much-dreamt new democracy requires political mobilization, not bourgeois reformism.

Józef: The petit-bourgeois groups you are talking about are the majority of the people. And...

José: The people have no antagonism with the working class. The working class represents the interests of all the working people.

Józef: Like the party, isn't it? You see, here again our experience gives us

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insight different from yours. We have lived for a long time under a system where the gratification of needs is planned according to a coherent set of values. The disappointment of this experience has made us suspicious of any political philosophy which claims the right to decree what it is right and what it is wrong "to need." What is the working class interest and what is against the working class' best will? Shall we wait for the party to say? The distinction between "natural" and "artificial" needs is absurd, even though it has been inspired by good intentions. How do you decide which is which? What are the criteria? Only a value system can provide them; and the time when we believed in a natural morality has long since passed. Where biological needs are satisfied—and even these are culturally defined and involve arbitrary choice—all other needs are "artificial." And these "artificial" needs, which presuppose human work, multiply geometrically. I do not want to deliver into the hands of the party—even the most revolutionary party—the power to impose a consistent system upon the moral realm, which is essentially ambiguous.

José: There you go again with your ghosts of "Stalinism." Natural or artificial, rational or irrational, just or unjust, constructive or harmful, whatever terms you may prefer, you must recognize the necessity for seeking criteria by which to determine the gratification of needs. Or are you proposing an already old, anarchical model?

In any case, it is not a question of choice. In a system organized in terms of profit, the pattern of what things should be desired is imposed. Right now, experts are deciding what we are going "to need" in a couple of years. The alternative is between their model and someone else's. But you do not see this. You are a melancholy conservative at heart. You are a prisoner of the past, plagued by a guilty conscience of failures, worn out by errors and your impotence to correct them. You want to be open, to deny determinism, but you end up denying the possibility of creating a real, new future. *All of this talk of yours doesn't help anything except capitalism under its cover of liberalism!!*

Józef: Only those who have never experienced the "dictatorship of the proletariat" can disdain the values of individual liberties. I don't care what epoch or class brought them to our culture. I like freedom and I need it!

José: What do you mean? Do you think I don't know what a dictatorship is? Listen, you would know better if you only gave a thought to the capitalist dictatorships all over the world. This liberal model of yours is dead. Look at a map. How many countries are still left with liberal political institutions? So few, very few indeed! Look at your Europe with Greece, Portugal, Spain, the tough repression in the liberal, highly developed capitalist countries. Can you be that blind? Free competition no longer rules the economy and liberties are no longer effective to check the monopoly of power held by the gigantic corporations and bureaucracies. Liberalism has become an impotent luxury.

Józef: So you will rather give up on this "luxury" and resign yourself to a really omnipotent dictatorship, right? Or don't you know what you are

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talking about?

José: You make it sound as if the few civil liberties that still exist were not the result of our struggle. People are still dying for them.

Józef: I am not so sure that the socialist revolutionaries have the right to claim all the merits for the conquest and preservation of liberties. But that doesn't matter now. I realize that the liberal beliefs and structures are in crisis in the face of the concentration of economic, political and intellectual power in the mass society. But the same problem challenges the socialist tradition as well. How can the sovereignty of the working people be possible in a system based on gigantic units and bureaucratic structures? Liberties may not be enough to guarantee democracy, but they are quite indispensable for making the condition of popular powerlessness at least bearable. Don't underestimate that—the difference between domination limited by laws and lawless tyranny is too great to be ignored.

José: You are holding to a world which is passing away. One of these mornings you will wake up to find a dead end in front of you. If you want to defend the progressive traditions of the past you must break altogether with the rules of this "democratic game" as it is played today. To conserve what deserves to be conserved you must have the courage to affirm a new beginning for tomorrow.

Józef: Are you planning to allow freedom for all people in this tommorow of yours?

José: People is also a historical concept. The bourgeoisie was people in 1789; it is not people anymore today. This should be obvious for you.

Józef: Who is going to decide who qualifies as "people" in your society? The party, right?

José: When you say the word party, what comes out is how many problems you have with the revolutionary organizations. We can talk about the party, too. But let me tell you something. The fact is that you don't care about the majority of mankind, about the millions of people starving to death, with nothing to eat, no shelter, no shoes, no schools for their children; no hospitals for their elderly and themselves. Your concerns for liberal democracy do not see that for millions of men democracy is not to paint in a new style, or to have the right to compose electronic music, or to write a novel as it damn well pleases me, but that it means to satisfy those basic needs. Your concerns about what will come after the revolution are by definition non-revolutionary—on one level because they demand guarantees from a future order that may not interest the large masses of our populations, or simply because the imperialist enemy will not allow us to give indiscriminately to everybody. Or do you think we can afford to give freedom of press to the big corporations? On another level, they are reactionary because they do not see that a new society is still built inside the old one, that people's participation in the revolution will provoke and create, and enlarge, where they will exist, your "precious civil liberties." Your concerns with our future make you unable to deal with our present. You have

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taught me a lesson in the sense that my eyes are opened to the fact that those who worry about the future of the revolution simply cannot participate in the real revolutions, the ones that take place only in the present.

As to the Party that you constantly bring up, again you don't see that your parties as they stand today have nothing to do with our views of revolutionary organizations. How do you think we can defeat our dictatorships? How do you imagine we can organize the working class to face its oppressors? Do you expect that through a social explosion capitalism will fall and socialism will come into existence? Hell, this attitude of yours leads to nowhere but passivity. You are one of those intellectuals who laugh at the revolutionary organizations, who treat them as obsolete paraphernalia, yet have nothing instead to propose, do nothing for changing the world, are scared of and distrust the people, and whose sole activity is to wonder about abstract questions such as how to *cleanly* transform reality and how to keep it always pure. Your behavior is objectively reactionary and...

Józef: You accuse me of being reactionary. See how things are. In my countries you would be regarded as an apologist for those in power, whereas I am honored as a revolutionary. On the other hand, perhaps I cannot be a vanguard in the action for change on the side of the world where you are. I lack the kind of utopian belief in the future which is needed for that; as a matter of fact, I do not believe in any God, any absolute which can sustain the hope for a radical break in history; but I do believe in evil, above all, the evil generated by the ambition to reach paradise. Do you know that phrase of St. Paul, "the evil which I hate, that I do"? It should be cited in every manual of revolution. I trust that the experience I have lived through gives me the right to speak to you, the new revolutionary vanguard, of such things. Our dialogue could continue; I would have more arguments and you still others. But we are facing in different directions, and our encounter will thus always involve tension. This tension implies that the terms "socialism" and "revolution" cover diverse kinds of societies and ideals; and it also means that socialists must again take up the struggle to overcome the never-ending conflict of values which constitutes the history of men. Why don't you see the results of the past socialist revolutions? Why keep on dreaming only with thin original goals?

José: There you are! As far as I am concerned, you were born an old man. You can think about all that confused stuff you just said because you do not have people starving in your country. Besides, I think that it is absolutely wrong to keep on questioning details about our future socialist society. The future man will solve the future problems he will face. But in a socialist way, that is the important thing. Our task is not to be prophets of tomorrow's problems, and their solutions. Problems will obviously exist, but then of a different sort. What we have to do is to solve our present historical situation. Yes, you are an old man! You are too hung up on your past failures to consider starting again.

Józef: And to me, you are nothing but a child.

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NOTES AND COMMENTARY:
*Their Factories and Our People**

by André Gorz

The capitalist division of labor is the source of all alienation. "It converts the labourer into a crippled monstrosity, by forcing his detail dexterity at the expense of a world of productive capabilities....The knowledge, the judgement, and the will, which, though in ever so small a degree, are practised by the independent peasant or handicraftsman...," are taken away from the workers and confiscated by capital which concentrates them in its machines, its organization of labor, its technology. Furthermore, "...the labourer is brought face to face with the intellectual potencies of the process of production, as the property of another, and as a ruling power." This separation of manual and intellectual labor "...cuts down the labourer into a detail labourer...." And, it "...makes science a productive force distinct from labour and presses it into the service of capital."[1]

In short, "To subdivide a man is...to assassinate him.... The subdivision of labour is the assassination of a people." And communism is nothing other than the movement which suppresses this division of labor; which "...overturns the basis of all earlier relations of production and intercourse," which replaces the capitalist hierarchization of functions and tasks by the "voluntary collaboration of individuals and which "...subjugates them to the power of the united individuals."[3]

Beginning in 1967, in Europe the traditional organization of the labor movement were in the process of forgetting all that when the capitalist division of labor found itself, throughout the world, at the center of the class struggle: in France and Italy, a new generation of workers of rural origin, driven towards the assembly line by the capitalist concentration in agriculture, rebelled against the parcelizing of tasks, the hierarchy, the routine, the supervisors, the piece-rate wage, while in the United States absenteeism, waste of time, the sabotage of material were cutting into the anticipated margins of profit.

Elsewhere, the war in Vietnam and the Chinese cultural revolution were overthrowing, at the same time, the accepted ideas of the superiority of western technology and the neutrality of science. We were discovering that there was a Vietnamese and Chinese medicine which, exceedingly less unwieldly, expensive and

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* This is the preface to a selection to appear soon in editions du Seuil ("Politique" collection) under the title *Critique de la Division du Travail*, which includes some of the writings of Karl Marx, Stephen Marglin, Dominique Pignon and Jean Querzola, Marco Maccio, *Il Manifesto*, Antonio Lettieri and Andre Gorz. Originally published in *Les Temps Modernes* no. 327 (Octobre 1973), pp. 565-574. English translation by David Pugh.

1. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, translated by Moore and Aveling (New York, 1936), pp. 396-397.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 399.

3. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, ed. by S. Ryazanskaya (Moscow, 1964), pp. 87-88. Cf. the following passage also, p. 93; "The transformation, through the division of labor, of personal powers (relationships) into material powers, cannot be dispelled by dismissing the general idea of it from one's mind, but can only be abolished by the individuals again subjecting these material powers to themselves and abolishing the division of labor... The illusory community, in which individuals have up till now combined, always took on an independent existence in relation to them, and was at the same time, since it was the combination of one class over against another, not only a completely illusory community, but a new fetter as well. In the real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association."

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"learned" (that is to say incomprehensible to the masses), was no less effective than ours. The same thing was going on in matters of agricultural or industrial technology: the gigantism of the complex machines dominating the hundreds of piece-rate workers which they serve, are not necessarily more effective than the teams of men and women collaborating in the use of machines which are flimsier and smaller, perfected by the workers themselves. Thus, we were learning that peasants could overcome the "technotronic" world; and that the separation of intellectual and manual forces, of theory and practice, of the producers with their tools and their products, do not even confer to capitalist technology a greater effectiveness.

It does not matter much through which subterranean processes the two movements met in the workers consciousness. The fact is there: the impulse of "Asiatic Communism" and the upheaval of the U.S. in Europe suddenly reached the end of a myth on which the mandarins of our society had seated their powers and priviledges: the myth that science and technology are "neutral", that they have neither the content nor the imprint of class, and that the division of labor that they establish results from "objective necessities," not from the exigencies of capitalist accumulation.

One can see further: the parcelling out and specialization of jobs, the split of intellectual and manual labor, the monopolization of science by elites, the abnormally large development of installations and the centralization of powers which flows to them—none of that is necessary for effective production. It is necessary only for the perpetuation and domination of capital. For the latter, all organization of work must be inextricably a technique of production and a technique of owners' domination of those who are producing: the goal of capitalist production can only be the growth of capital itself, and this goal, alien to the workers, can only be realised through them by constraint (forceful or subtle).

To produce and to dominate; to dominate those who are made to produce and those who are enslaved to the goals which are alien to them, to the tools with which people impose on them their minute mode of employment: the will of domination is profoundly inscribed in the nature of the machines, in the organization of production, in the division of labor which it materializes: capital, its representatives and functionaries, on one hand, the supervisors of production, on the other.[4] Organization, techniques of production, division of labor form the material matrix, which, invariably, reproduce through inertia the relations of labor hierarchies, the relations of capitalist production. Marx had already seen this clearly without, however, drawing the conclusions: "The technical subordination of the workman to the uniform motion of the instruments of labour, and the peculiar composition of the body of workpeople, consisting as it does of individuals of both sexes and of all ages, give rise to a barrack discipline, which is elaborated into a complex system in the factory, and which fully developes the before mentioned labour of overlooking, thereby dividing the workpeople into operatives and overlookers, into private soldiers and sergeants of an industrial army."[5]

4. I have discussed in "Technical Intelligence and the Capitalist Division of Labor" (*Telos* 12, Summer 1972), the problem of determining when and to what extent engineers and technicians become part of the working class, or, to the contrary, representatives and functionaries of the requirements of capital (particularly fixed capital).

5. *Capital*, Vol. I, *op.cit.*, Chapter XV, Section 4, p. 463.

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In this passage, it is the technology of the factory which imposes a certain technical division of labor, which in turn exacts a certain type of subordination, of hierarchy and of despotism. Thus, technology is apparently the matrix and final cause of everything and one does not see how "collective appropriation" of the means of production carrying the imprint of *this* technology would be able to change anything in the regimen of the factory, in the "stuntedness" and the oppression of the workers. It is not because they will become collectively "owners" of *these* factories that the proletarians will be able to develop a "totality of abilities"[6] while working there. Quite the contrary: as long as the material matrix remains unchanged, "the collective appropriation" of the mass of factories can only be a *perfectly abstract* transfer of legal property, a transfer which will be incapable of putting an end to the oppression and subordination of the workers.[7]

If it leaves the organization and techniques of production intact, such a transfer will also leave intact the matrix of hierarchical relations of domination and authority along with the old division of labor; in short, the relations of capitalist production. Power will remain with capital, changing only those who represent it. Private management will be replaced by state management, capitalist bureaucracy by a "political" bureaucracy, equally devoid of common people, etc. The roles and "skills" required by the old division of labor will justify the preservation of the old oppressive, hierarchizing, selective school system and the educational bourgeois will continue to propagate bourgeois values and choose a new functionary bourgeois (or "state bourgeoisie"), no longer possessors of property but possessors of the powers of disposition and decision which were linked to property.[8]

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6. Marx speaks moreover of "the appropriation of productive forces" and not only of the means of production; and the term "appropriation" is much broader than its mere juridical meaning. Cf. for example, *The German Ideology*, pp. 84-85: "Thus things have now come to such a pass, that the individuals must appropriate the existing totality of productive forces, not only to achieve self-activity, but, also, to safeguard their very existence. This appropriation is first determined by the object to be appropriated, the productive forces, which have been developed to a totality and which only exist within a universal intercourse.... The appropriation of these forces is itself nothing more than the development of the individual capacities corresponding to the material instruments of production. The appropriation of a totality of instruments of production is, for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves. This appropriation is further determined by the persons appropriating. Only the proletarians of the present day, who are completely shut off from all self-activity, are in a position to achieve a complete and no longer restricted self-activity, which consists in the appropriation of a totality of capacities." This passage, which defines the purpose (or *essence*) of the proletariat, implies a dialectical reversal in which one perceives the Hegelian (and Christian) relationship. Only those who are nothing can become everything. In fact, this postulate is totally abstract: the fact of being totally denied existence by everything will not automatically engender, for the proletarians, the *ability* nor the *possibility* of totally regaining themselves while appropriating the totality which negates them. How can this ability come to them? Surely not from the conditions of oppression and "stuntedness" in which they are held. It can come to them only out of the *struggle against* these conditions, the struggle through which the proletariat revolutionizes everything, including itself. On this point, see Andre Gorz, *La Morale de l'Histoire*, ch. III (Paris, 1959).

7. That is, moreover, what Marx notes a little further on in *The German Ideology*, p. 85: "In all expropriations up to now, a mass of individuals remained subservient to a single instrument of production; in the appropriation by the proletarians, *a mass of instruments of production must be made subject to each individual* and property to all." (My italics.)

8. Cf. Charles Bettelheim, *Cacul Economique et Formes de Propriete* (Paris, 1970).

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If the transition to communism is to take place, if it is to have a *collective* appropriation (and not state controlled) *by the producers* of the means of production and a victory of voluntary collaboration over the hierarchical division of tasks, then it is necessary that the producers direct the appropriation themselves and thus overthrow the techniques, the organization of labor, the directions for use of the machines, the disposition of location of work, the relation of knowledge and the institutions (school) which transmit it.... Because the "means of production" are not only installations and machines: they are also the techniques, the science incorporated in machines and installations, *which dominate*[9] the workers as a "productive power independent of labor." Indeed: science and technology must be both revolutionized and recovered by the proletariat, reappropriated collectively, as power common for all, by the reunification of manual and intellectual labor, the complete refounding of the organization of labor as well as of education.

In no case can the power of the working class restrain itself to lighten labor, to reduce the duration and increase the reward: the capitalist determination of labor is—independently of the unacceptable finalities of capitalist production—the destruction of the laborer, the negation of his freedom, in short, his alienation. Marx has stated this admirably in the pages of *Capital* when one finds statements such as the following: "At the same time that factory work exhausts the nervous system to the uttermost, it does away with the many-sided play of the muscles, and confiscates every atom of freedom both in bodily and intellectual activity. The lightening of labor, even, becomes a sort of torture, since the machine does not free the labourer from work, but deprives the work of all interest. Every kind of capitalist production...has this in common, that it is not the workman that employs the instruments of labour, but the instruments of labour that employ the workman."[10]

That is why the emancipation of the working class, its power, *begins* through the struggle to recover its physical, neural, intellectual, cultural integrity in the heart of labor, that is to say, through the struggle to impose the power of self-determination on the process of labor. "However, how would the working class exercise its power...if it had only a narrow, specialized knowledge of production and was dominated by technology?" writes Claude Broyelle.[11] And in the same work: "People can no longer satisfy themselves with the system of the U.S.S.R.: 'Here is a state factory, and the state is the Party, and the Party is the masses, thus the factory belongs to the workers. Q.E.D.' No, this is no longer tenable. If someone says to me: 'This factory is yours, it belongs to the people', but I blindly obey the orders of the directors, I understand nothing of my machine and still less in the rest of the factory, it I do not know what becomes of my product when it is finished nor why it was produced, if I work quickly, very quickly for a bonus, and if, in the meantime, I am bored to death by it all week, Sunday and each holiday, if I am, besides, more

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9. *Capital*, Vol. I, *op.cit.*, Chapter XIV, Section 5, p. 397. In a note at the bottom of the page Marx adds: "The man of knowledge and the productive laborer come to be widely divided from each other, and knowledge, instead of remaining the handmaid of labor in the hand of the laborer to increase his productive powers...has almost everywhere arrayed itself against labor...systematically deluding and leading them (the laborers) astray in order to render their muscular powers entirely mechanical and obedient."

10. *Ibid.*, Chapter XV, Section 4, p. 462.

11. Claudie Broyelle, *La Moitie du Ciel*, (Paris, 1973), p. 39 and p. 27.

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neglected after years of work than at the beginning—in that case this factory is not mine, it does not belong to the people!"

And it no longer belongs to the people if all the labor, while countenancing the bloom of bodily and intellectual faculties, has goals which cannot be everyone's and produces riches reserved, *by definition*, for a minority.[12] It no longer belongs to the people if the units of production by reason of their enormity, can only be managed centrally, by a techno-bureaucracy, and if the rigidity of their imperatives of operation and profit orientation take away from the people all initiatives and choice in the definition of the goals of production (and therefore consumption). Thus, the giant industrial (or administative) concentrations which devote entire cities (Turin, Belfort, Coventry, Detroit, for industry; Paris, Rome, the Hague for bureaucracy), indeed entire regions (Lorraine, Ruhr), to monoproduction, render the entire populations incapable of producing—and consuming—according to their own needs, or even to define these needs in an autonomous manner: grateful consumers of the marketable goods and services that the institutional monopolies offer them, they are the forced producers of other marketable goods and services in the heart of monopolistic institutions.

The monopolization of production by formal institutions—industrial, management trusts—and the specialized corporations (doctors, engineers, state corporations), means that everyone is compelled to produce what he does not consume, to consume what he does not produce and not being able to produce nor consume according to one's own individual or collective desires. It is no longer a unity of socially divided labor able to correspond to the experience of cooperation, of exchange, of production in common with a global result. This unity is assured only by the marketplace, on the one hand, and private and state bureaucracies on the other. Hence, it imposes itself on individuals as an external unity, as "an alien force existing outside them, the origin and goal of which they are ignorant...." In short, the link between social production and individual consumption, between labor and social consumption, between the individual and society is shattered at the level of sense experience. The individual is not at one with himself: he encounters the tools and results of social production as "an alien power," from which "he cannot escape" and which "enslaves him instead of being controlled by him."[13]

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12. I emphasize "by definition": capitalist development, in fact, progresses by modernizing the privileges ("Concorde," Color TV, apartments with swimming pools) as well as poverty. Accordingly, as the masses have access to goods recently reserved for the elite, the latter has access to "better" goods which devalue the first. The capitalist model of consumption bases itself on the principle that what is good enough for *all* is not good enough for *you*. The communist model of consumption bases itself on the inverse principle: what is good enough for me is only that which is good for all.

13. *The German Ideology, op.cit.*, pp. 45-46. The passage must be quoted in full: "...as long, therefore, as activity is not voluntarily, but naturally, divided, man's own deed becomes an alien power opposed to him, which enslaves him instead of being controlled by him. For as soon as the distribution of labor comes into being, each man has a particular, exclusive sphere of activity, which is forced upon him and from which he cannot escape. He is a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd, or a critical critic, and must remain so if he does not want to lose his means of livelihood; while in communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have a mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd or

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Here, again, judicial statute and a simple transfer of property of industrial and commercial monopolies will change nothing. To speak of the "collective ownership" of a national or even transnational monopoly is an abstraction as devoid of meaning as speaking of the incarnation of the "sovereignty of the people" in a Parliament. The simple fact is that the institutional apparatus of production and exchange do not lend themselves, in their present configuration, to the control and ownership by the producers associated in the heart of real living and working communities; they lend themselves solely to *institutional* control and ownership by state machineries which perpetuate, with the social division of tasks, the stratification of class society and, in particular, the existence of bureaucracy which maintains the proletariat in a state of dependence and subordination as total as that under private capitalism.

It is not possible to have communism without a communist life-style (without communist "culture" as the Anglo-Saxons would say, to whom we owe the expression "cultural revolution"); but it is not possible to have a communist life-style based on technology, on the institutions and division of labor which come out of capitalism. The power of the proletariat and collective proletarian ownership can be realized only if the proletarians, as individuals, groups, teams, communities, have the power to unite and decide together, where they work and where they live, what they want to produce, how, when and where. In the absence of this power, the power of the proletarian class (its dictatorship, its state) will be completely nominal and abstract. It will cease to be nominal and abstract only if the means and organization of production, by their size, their techniques, their localization, etc., permit—indeed promote—a real autonomy of real communities producing and making available to all a considerable share of the necessities of life, and deciding according to their interest what is essential or superfluous.Ivan Illich has put it better than anyone else: The tools that a convivial society needs must be simple enough so that anyone can learn to manage them, and small enough so that individuals of groups of non-specialists can utilize them to ends which they themselves will have freely defined. Of course, steel or electricity[14] can never be produced in your garden. However, that is not necessary for conviviality. This does not exclude grand installations. It requires only a balance between the outlay of human and mechanical energy and the total energy available and the quantity which everyone can dispose of. The collective ownership of tools can have two diametrically opposed

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critic. This fixation of social activity, this consolidation of what we ourselves produce into an objective power above us, growing out of our control, thwarting our expectations, bringing to naught our calculations, is one of the chief factors in historical development up till now....

"The social power, i.e., the multiplied productive force, which arises through the cooperation of different individuals as it is determined by the division of labor, appears to these individuals, since their cooperation is not voluntary but has come about naturally, not as their own united power, but as an alien force existing outside them, of the origin and goal of which they are ignorant, which they thus cannot control, which on the contrary passes through a peculiar series of phases and stages independent of the will and the action of man, nay even being the prime governor of these." In this passage Marx gives a definition and a description of *alienation* totally free of "the anthropological essentialism" with which the Althusserians reproach him: one should notice the coincidence of this notion of alienation and the one developed by Sartre in the *Critique de la Raison Dialectique* in terms of serialized activities unified through the material field of the practico-inert and coming back against each individual as his negation by others.

14. The production of solar electricity is not, in reality, an insurmountable problem, even (or especially) on a small scale.

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effects: it can subordinate social relations to the exigency of the tools, like putting men in the service of machines in a manner more effective yet than capitalism. Such is the essence of Stalinism. Or, on the contrary, collective ownership of tools can signify that the community is engaging in employing the tools to promote convivial social relations. But, in this case, it will also take upon itself to renounce, as soon as possible and whatever the cost, large units producing on a large scale, insofar as these large units, if they are efficient, require a type of organization incompatible with conviviality. In a word, the socialization of tools can and must serve to banish tools which, by their stature, their influence or their nature, do not permit a convivial life-style. This is not a "pastoral utopia". During the past one hundred and fifty years, the effective utilization of science has seemed to require a specialization and division of labor more and more extended. In order to be powerful, tools had to be large. Society can no longer continue in this manner.[15]

15. For an extended articulation of this argument, see Ivan Illich, *Tools for Conviviality* (New York, 1973).

*On the Ideological and Moral Fitness of Professors and Teaching Staff at Belgrade University**

The Assembly of Belgrade University, at its session of December 17, 1973, adopted a Recommendation on Criteria for the Election of Professors and their Assistants at Belgrade University. Bearing in mind the specific responsibilities of the teaching staff the Assembly has also pointed out their particular obligation, i.e.: That the Marxist approach be the basis of their teaching and public activities; That their teaching and public functions be in accord with the Program and Policy of the League of Yugoslav Communists and with its leading role in the development of society.

Along these guildelines an analysis was made of the approach and the behavior of the group of professors and their assistants at the Faculty of Philosophy of Belgrade University (Mihajlo Markovic, Ljubomir Tadic, Svetozar Stojanovic, Zagorka Pesic-Golubovic, Miladin Zivotic, Dragoljub Micunovic, Nebojsa Popov, Trivo Indjic) and it was established that, from an ideological, political and moral point of view, they were unfit to continue their teaching functions.

Theoretical activity of the group, it was pointed out, had been directed towards the creation of an ideological basis of the opposition to the policy of the League of Yugoslav Communists in the development of the self-management society. The members of the group refused Marx's view that the working class is the only true revolutionary class and emphasized a special role of the humanistic intelligentsia in the revolution and in the League of Yugoslav Communists. They claim that Yugoslavia as a society of workers and social self-management is a myth, and impute Stalinism to the leading forces of the society, i.e., to the very forces which have most

* *Editor's note: The following is a statement issued by the Yugoslav Embassy in Washington in reply to a group of Harvard scholars protesting the expulsion of the* Praxis *philosophers from Belgrade University. The document requires no additional comment.*

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radically opposed Stalinism. They also demand institutionalization of the procedural rights of the minority, thereby denying the principle of democratic centralism branding it as bureaucratic and obsolete.

These professors take the critical character of philosophy in a dogmatic way. In their view, for instance, the principle of merciless criticism of all that exists is not itself subject to criticism. They attempted to impose the elitist view of themselves as being a group of "authentic radical" Marxists. In the name of group solidarity, not hesitating even to align themselves with nationalists, they attempted to create an atmosphere of conflict of the League of Yugoslav Communists with the intelligentsia, proclaiming themselves as representatives of all the intelligentsia of Yugoslav society. By doing so, the group itself came into conflict with constitutional and self-management principles.

In resisting the principle of democratic centralism, the fundamental concept of organization of the League of Yugoslav Communists, some members of the group openly demanded recognition of the existence of an active minority within the Party and of its right to openly advocate the change of the adopted policy (S. Stojanovic, in *Praxis*, Nos. 3, 4, 1972), which is in contradiction to the ideological and political principles of the League of Yugoslav Communists. The organizing of the vanguard, as they have demanded, would open the door to bourgeois liberalism which would be only the first step towards the restoration of a multiparty system and, finally, to the change of the social and political system of Yugoslavia. In fact, they demand that every party faction may become a party which would, through political means, demand to be recognized as a political force. To this end they attempted to discredit the party leadership by labelling it "Stalinist" and by demanding that "our radical Marxist intelligentsia" should inform the leftist movements of the world about the essential difference between the "ideological claims and the social reality" in Yugoslavia.

The above illustrates that what is involved is not a conflict between the League of Yugoslav Communists and creative Marxists but, rather, a political conflict in which the League of Yugoslav Communists and the institutions of the self-management society have shown maximum tolerance. This tolerance, however, had its limits since the above group has resorted to an organized political attack on the League of Yugoslav Communists and on its social institutions.

The demand for a movement separate from the League of Yugoslav Communists, composed of industrial workers, intellectuals and radical leftist students, spells out opposition to the leading role of the League. Recent experience with another movement (in Croatia) clearly proves that, in view of the diversity of contradictions in Yugoslavia, the sharing of this role with another movement, though of a different nature, would in fact lead to a bourgeois pluralism which is incompatible with the Yugoslav concept of self-management socialist democracy.

The criticism of the "charismatic leader" brings into question the policy of the League of Yugoslav Communists prior to, during, and after the Revolution, and seeks "revision" of the official image of the development of the League and the Revolution. Discussing the "charismatic officials" and the "charismatic leader," taking as a point of departure the cult of Stalin, contains the most direct allusions to the Yugoslav society. The overall picture, as depicted by them, is so bleak that it calls for the destruction of the whole system rather than opening prospects for the removal of negative phenomena, that have already been the focus of the League's criticism.

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One of the essential features of the views and behavior of this group is the creation of the atmosphere of the alleged open general conflict between the Party and the intelligentsia, the Party which, according to their writings, is a pillar of a bureaucratic system and the intelligentsia which, also according to their view, must have a special status within the Party. That special status is reflected in the monopoly over defining social goals which is the prerogative of the working class and of the Party. The attempt at turning the League into the executor of the will of the "humanistic intelligentsia" reveals not the conflict of the Party with the intelligentsia but of a small group of the intelligentsia with the Party's strategy.

In the name of "autonomy of science" and "academic freedom" the Departments headed by the members of this group were turned into training grounds for the training of their own political followers, building up among the students their own cult of personality and presenting themselves as the conscience of the society and of its vanguard. Through their graduates, attempts were made at creating their footholds in high-schools as well. Instead of pursuing their theoretical and teaching functions, they continuously sought channels through which they would achieve their group monopoly interest and their opposition political platform, thus turning their Departments into their own private political instruments.

Fighting fanatically for "purifying" the ranks of Belgrade University they abused self-management and by means of their voting machinery they removed from the Faculty of Philosophy a number of Communists who refused to side with them under their pseudo-radical banner, while at the same time they elected to the teaching positions only their likeminded.

*On the Principle of Scientific Conscience**

by Jan Patočka

Opinions concerning the essence of science, its significance, and its value vary profoundly with one's philosophical orientation. These questions have to do with those deep, eternal, and probably unanswerable questions about what we know about the meaning of truth; questions which reappear as man in the course of history takes account of himself, of the ways of his facticity, and of the possibilities for his freedom. Fortunately though, if we are to reflect upon the role of science in society, it is necessary to deal not so much with what science is as with what it does and how it proceeds.

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* *Jan Patocka belongs to the older generation of Czechoslovak philosophers. He is one of the few surviving students of Edmund Husserl. In the West, he first attracted attention in 1937 with his authoritative* Husserl-Bibliographie. *His subsequent work, continuing in the tradition of Husserl's rigorous phenomenology, fell under the shadow of history. In 1939, Hitler occupied Czechoslovakia and closed down Czech universities for the duration of the war. Then, after a three year respite, the Communist coup in 1948 imposed a new orthodoxy which had little sympathy for Husserlian humanism. While that orthodoxy lifted briefly twenty years later during the liberalization of 1968, it was reimposed no less rigidly in the wake of Soviet occupation lasting to this day. Inevitably, Patocka's work emerged in public view only fleetingly, in the interstices of history. "On the Principle of Scientific Conscience" clearly articulates his predicament of repression and isolation—precisely what tends to destroy the scientific conscience. Translated from the Czech by Karel Kovanda.*

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Characteristic for the situation of science today, as opposed to a period as recent as the 19th century, is that it affects the lives of all of us. Most advanced specialized knowledge, particularly in the natural sciences but also increasingly in the social sciences, is influencing every individual, as testified by modern industrially conducted warfare, by the impact of the nuclear situation on the division of the world, by the role of public opinion research in politics. In estimates of the wealth of nations, the aspect of productive goods is becoming overshadowed by the aspect of productive potential. Therefore science, in its technological form, is becoming the single decisive productive force and the control and organization of science is acquiring priority importance. Giant institutions are being created and we run into them everywhere, under the name of Institutes or Academies. Expenditure for science in cultured countries is increasing and is even considered one of the measures of civilization. This, however, has also generated an unheard-of assault on science from outside, also without precedent in history.

From the early modern age until the 19th century, from Galileo to Darwinism, the pressure exerted upon science was in principle one of ideas, it was a religious and ideological defense against dangerous *views*. The contemporary assault is not waged with ideas but, more practically, with economics and politics, both of which are only served by ideology. Thus for example during the notorious discussions of biology or linguistics it was possible to observe that the content of the officially promulgated theses was less important than their capacity to rape and brake the scientist, rendering him totally docile, mobile, and disposable. Particularly treacherous is that form of external control which takes place in the name of and under the protective heading of "scientific management": which might mean management either externally aided by scientific results, or directed by the inner principle of science. Results can be applied without criticism and inner comprehension, but the inner process of science coincides with a critical approach and factual understanding. And here it is necessary to discuss the principles of this inner process.

Fundamentally, the scientific process is conscious, active objectivation [*objektivace*]. In the sciences, we dispose of that subjective perspective, that private element which is a part of our situation in the world and our original practical orientation in it. This struggle against the privately situational element is as radical as can be in the natural sciences but has from the very beginning certain limitations in the historical and social sciences: the historical world is a generally human one, whereas the world of natural science aspires to be purely one of objects though this is probably an infinite and unfulfillable task. This process of objectivation is supra-individual, it requires cooperation and tradition, the transmission of knowledge from individual to individual, from generation to generation. Striving to achieve objectivity, the scholar is aware of his subjectivity and sacrifices it, problematizes it. This question-mark over him, this constant provisorium he lives in, is the spirit of scientific work, the air without which he would not be true to himself and would perish.

Hence the implication that science is not *results* but rather a *process* in which every result is again and again subject to criticism. The final arbiter is no personal or social agent but the very subject of science—*the thing itself*. The thing itself, in its purity, is, however, only at the end of an asymptotic process of constant self-criticism. This requirement of continuous self-examination is a part of the nature of science. A scholar thus has to satisfy a constant *requirement*. One might therefore

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suggest that fulfilling scientific tasks depends on the *principle of scientific conscience*—if by conscience we understand that which forces upon us the requirement of acting properly and of re-examining whether our actual activity corresponds to the norm of propriety. The principle of scientific conscience can be formulated simply: the single arbiter which a scholar may and must respect when formulating his judgments is the discussion of his peers, conducted with respect to nothing but factuality.

Scientific conscience is something different from the principle of freedom of science inasmuch as this freedom includes the possibility of freely and individually staking out the subject matter, freely broadcasting research results, etc. The principle of scientific conscience is equally valid everywhere: in basic theory as in applications, in a subject matter determined from without as in problems freely unearthed by scientific ingenuity. Also, it is independent of the scientific discipline, of the historical state and of the degree of objectivation of a given discipline. It is therefore just as valid for disciplines where the impact of personality is minimal, as in mathematics, as for those where the personality is ineluctably relevant, as in history or philosophy. Its far-reaching implications include the substantial internationality of science, its incompatibility with dogmatism, religious or political, etc. It is a formal principle, i.e., it is independent of the subject matter, and a hypothetical one, i.e., it holds only for those who already consider the value of scholarship and of scientifically determined truths as binding for themselves; but it cannot, in and of itself, serve to substantiate these values. In turn, it can well be used to determine a true scholar. Whoever in fact disregards this principle cannot be a scholar, although for appearance's sake, for a limited time, and under some circumstances he might engage in "scientific research," i.e., he might perform—in accordance with his talents and training—certain thought processes, arriving thereby at certain results, etc. In this manner he may become a *scientific bureaucrat;* but not a *practicing scientist*, responsible for his actions.

One sign of a practicing scientist is his awareness of the *indivisibility* of the principle of scientific conscience. Though the principle is the basis for *scientific individuality*, it establishes at the same time scientific solidarity. It unites scholars as free personalities.

A scientific bureaucrat may be more talented and therefore more successful in his research than a practicing scientist. Results may conceal the difference between true scholarship and one that is potentially or actually corrupted. Potential corruption is manifest, e.g., in insulation within the confines of a particular science: a natural scientist, for example, may feel no solidarity with those who, in sciences of the mind, are subject to pressures of control. If at the same time he enjoys the fruits of the benevolence of those in power and provides them with the resources of their strength, and if he fails to recognize that precisely through his indifference and his supportive role he becomes an accomplice of this pressure, potential corruption gets transformed into real, actual corruption. All the same, there might exist manifest successes and results, and yet science of this nature is internally dead, ready for a coup de grace which might come at any time, whenever the deforming exterior influence selects precisely the field cultivated by the successful "scientist" for a demonstration of its omnipotence. Thus manifest success, authority and influential positions do not guarantee scientific conscience; rather, when by themselves, they evoke its suspicion. Such suspicion is particularly pertinent in instances where a

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given institution was engendered not through an internal spontaneous act of scientific initiative but through an act willed by the powerful scientifically incompetent organisms. It is therefore shortsignted and naive for certain officials pressured by the public to account for their scientific morality to defend themselves by pointing out the smooth functioning of institutions, various kinds of international recognition, etc. They demonstrate thereby only their utter insensitivity to the problem and their utter incompetence to perform what they are pretending to.

On the other hand, however, it appears to me that the aforementioned implies the following conclusion: *In order to demonstrate, protect, and develop scientific conscience, scientists have to associate;* for their research it will not suffice that society provide them with positions, institutes, schools, etc. Apart from that, soceity has to guarantee them the possibility to associate *qua personalities*, to defend their moral interests and those other interests which follow from and are connected with morality. This guarantee can be given in no other way than by accounting for the possibility to associate in the above manner in law, and further, by the society resolving, in equally a legal manner, to listen to and respect the voice of this association of scientific personalities in all matters concerning science.

Here I see the more profound significance of the Association of Scientists whose preparatory and program committees have recently [summer 1968] started work. Our scholars have realized that scientific institutions with their organized activities not only do not represent them but that they indeed hinder their voice from freely bearing on the historical decisions of our life; they have realized furthermore that with a lack of initiative to defend their own moral interests, the inner essence of their scientific activity is suspended in thin air, exposed to dangers similar to those whose well-documented, unbecoming results are in everybody's memory. The participants in this enterprise do not, contrary to what some might perhaps fancy, call for a simple change in leading positions. They do not want to substitute one bureaucracy for another. They want to do away with the bureaucratization of science in general. The practices of those who are holding on to leading positions in institutes at any costs although they quite clearly belong to the period of corrupted scientific conscience evoke pity and exasperation with their insensitivity to the question of being or non-being of science in this country.

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REVIEWS:

Stanley Aronowitz, *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973. 465 pp.

Alice and Staughton Lynd, eds. *Rank and File: Personal Histories by Working Class Organizers.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1973. 296 pp.

Technology presently exists in the U.S. which can make it possible to free workers from alienated labor without sacrificing their material needs. The economy has become so inter-dependent that workers in any of a dozen basic industries can bring the system to its knees in a matter of days by simply withholding their labor. The American working class brings to this context a hundred years of organized militancy and unprecedented command of the strike weapon. Still, no revolution. Many ask, with Stanley Aronowitz, "why the working class in America remains a dependent force and what the conditions are that may reverse this situation,"[1] the fundamental question he explores in *False Promises.*

Wilhelm Reich argued in the 1930's that the internal life of the German trade unions and the left parties simply reproduced the authoritarianism of the corporations and the nuclear family. Their alternative to bourgeois alienation objectively reinforced the system's repression of life forces. They were unable to halt the spread of fascism since their own practice, whatever their rhetoric, actually served to pave its way. Aronowitz agrees with Reich that consciousness is shaped in the structure of daily life. It is there that he looks for the roots of stultified class consciousness; it is there that he searches for the elements of its transcendence. He rejects though, the need for a postulated psychic energy system, and meets the structural functionalists on their own terms.

Thus, he locates the root of potential liberation not in instinct, but in the everyday childhood world of play. The characteristics of play include its democratic structure, its concern for fairness, its generation of enjoyment for its own sake, and its use of unbounded time. Examples include circle games, turn games and rotation games where even if persons must be singled out to be "it" or "the farmer in the dell," egalitarianism is the rule. Socialization functions to purge memories of such activities from our consciousness, as we are taught to understand organizations hierarchically, activity instrumentally, time structurally. The institution which mediates between childhood and the social structure is the school.

Essential though the economic functions of schooling may be to a technological society, Aronowitz finds its social functions dominant. Whatever the particular curriculum or grade, the most significant lessons are respect for authority, self-discipline (apparently autonomous repression), and the ideology of mobility which rests on individual responsibility for success or failure. The internal structures by which these lessons are taught move from the quasi-familial elementary school, through the transitional junior high school, to the high school which, in both structure and social function, reproduces the factory perfectly. In positing the high schools to be the critical point for determining students' life-chances, Aronowitz seems to forget that the tracks and "ability-groups" have already long been

1. Aronowitz, p. 6.

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established, but he clearly describes the institutionalization of those tracks into internal hierarchies, separating students from each other and prefiguring the social division of labor. Resistance to high school's inevitable alienation has traditionally included youth-exclusive slumber parties and music. Its phenomenal increase in recent years has taken the form of Marcuse's "Great Refusal" as students mark out the lavatories as liberated areas and wage insurgent struggles for control of the hallways. The training of teachers increasingly resembles that of Green Berets. Counter-insurgency determines the standards by which "good teaching" is judged.

Technological unemployment has now made it possible, even necessary, for large numbers of working class youth to go to college. The community colleges to which they are sent contain them from the labor force, screen out the unsocialized elements, and train them for jobs in the bureaucracies, particularly those connected with the distribution of services. Here, the curriculum consists of the toleration of boredom and the alienation of theory from practice, mind from body. Learning loses its intrinsic joy; it becomes a mere instrument for survival, another form of alienated labor.

Marx located the root of alienated labor in private property and the capitalist mode of production. Automation, and its corresponding increase in non-productive free time, without a change in social relations, has spread the alienation of the factory throughout all aspects of society. A mass culture has arisen not only to create new material needs, but to colonize the imagination and co-opt the discontent of the working class. The impulse for play has been replaced by leisure, which is bought and sold like any other commodity. Even love has been debased into alienated sex in the interest of profit and control.

These developments have been met with resistance, defensive though it may be. Customized cars, acid rock and simple daydreaming on the job are employed to preserve the non-instrumental character of creative labor. The contradiction between the real possibility of abundance and the ideology of the work ethic is expressed in sporadic revolt, sabotage and dropping out. Rarely, though, is this resistance given form by the workers' own organs, the trade unions. Production workers at Lordstown have independently organized to "double up" as a means to relieve the monotony and isolation of the assembly line, with neither the inspiration nor the support of the UAW. Aronowitz looks for the causes of this phenomenon in the historical formation of the working class itself and in the social division of labor abetted by that process. He finds that Marx's presupposition of a common culture among the working class and expectation of the eventual uniformity of industrial labor calls for serious revision. Most important, he argues, is Marx's underestimation of the alienation within the working class caused by hierarchical stratification of the division of labor. Ultimately, he calls into question the very independence of the forces of production in relation to consciousness and industrial organization.

The historical roots of this development can be found in the high rate of agricultural productivity during the early 19th century made possible by the exploitation of slave labor, and the resulting capital accumulation which could be invested in industrialization after 1860. With the introduction of mechanization, farmers were forced into the cities, artisan skills were rationalized in content even while being stratified in ideology, and European workers and peasants, unable to compete with American productivity, emigrated to the U.S. in unprecedented waves.

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Out of this massive immigration arose, says Aronowitz, the intense ethnic chauvinism among the working class which, historically, has proven its single greatest obstacle to consciousness. "It was its lack of a common historical culture, its lack of common language, social traditions, geographic origins, which made impossible the modes of communication which generate solidarity. In turn, this fragmentation gave rise to unique modes of corporate domination embodying both material and spiritual elements."[2]

Ethnic stratification within the working class has largely been a function of both the chronology of various groups' immigration and of the political culture with which they arrived. The English, the Scottish, and the first wave of Irish took advantage of their early immigration by dominating the crafts which, even today, control the trade unions. Those Irish who came in the second wave, finding earlier opportunities closed, drew on their political experience in the independence struggle by entrenching themselves in the growing urban bureaucracies. Jews, Germans and some Greeks who were artisans and proprietors in Europe were able to continue these functions here. Weakest of the immigrants were the Southern and Eastern European peasants arriving after 1880 with such disadvantages as Catholicism, lack of urban industrial experience, and a culture which stressed the inevitability of their lot. These groups formed the unskilled masses, divided even among themselves by their different languages, for whom a union contract which resembled a feudal code was an advance.

Regarding the intense discrimination which faced black workers in the Northern cities, Aronowitz summarizes by explaining that they "came too late",[3] an explanation which, unfortunately, does not account for their continued subordination. He omits the fact that the waves of immigration meant, for blacks, displacement even from those trades to which they had been admitted. In the 1830's, for example, a majority of New York City's servants were black. With the first wave of Irish immigration in the 1840's, they were displaced by these white immigrants at such a rate that, by 1850, Irish servants alone numbered ten times the entire black population of NYC.[4] Aronowitz tells us that the Irish were "swiftly recruited for...personal services,"[5] but does not say at whose expense.

Neither can his analysis account for the fact that, between Reconstruction and World War I, fifteen million immigrants were absorbed into the labor force, often again at the expense of black workers. Harold Baron, after pointing out the existing labor shortage at the time, writes that, "Blacks were not only shut off from the new jobs, but lost many of the jobs they had traditionally held. The Irish largely replaced them in street paving, the Slavs replaced them in brickyards, and all groups moved in on the once-black stronghold of dining-room waiting."[6] Black workers in the North were excluded from practically every union; between 1882 and 1900, no less than fifty strikes were called to keep blacks out of industry. It was only with the economic boom and manpower mobilization of the first world war, and the closing of immigration, blacks were permitted to enter the industrial proletariat in large

2. Aronowitz, p. 415.
3. Aronowitz, p. 198.
4. Leon Litwack: *North of Slavery* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press; 1961), p. 166.
5. Aronowitz, p. 158.
6. Harold Baron: "The Demand for Black Labor: Historical Notes on the Political Economy of Racism," in *Radical America* 5:2 (Mar-Apr, 1971), p. 18.

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numbers. Even then, they were limited to the dirtiest and lowest-paid labor in positions openly referred to as "Negro jobs". The post war period's economic slowdown resulting not only in the wholesale firing of blacks, but in 25 incidents of large-scale mob violence against black communities in the last six months of 1919 alone. Even today, over half a century since their mass migration to Northern cities and proletarianization, the median black family income is only 59% that of whites, a proportion which has remained unchanged for 14 years.

An adequate understanding of this phenomenon requires a slight shift in Aronowitz's focus. The most important date is not 1914, when blacks began to move north in large numbers, but 1619, when the trade in African slaves began on the North American continent. Racist ideology in the U.S. flourished for two and a half centuries before the waves of European immigration began. By the time of industrialization, black people had undergone a bewildering succession of pseudo-scientific theories to "prove" their inferiority, from the Chain of Being to the Happy Slave to the more sophisticated myths, fashionable again today, of cultural and genetic disadvantage. The duration of this ideology, perpetuated by ruling classs interest, has made racism an independent material force, different both quantitatively and qualitatively from the ethnic chauvinisms which were used to divide European-American workers.

The ruling class eagerly took advantage of all divisions among the workers. Eastern Europeans working in the steel mills were interspersed on the line so that no worker spoke the same language as those to his right or his left. International Harvester maintained its open shop policy by hiring according to ethnic quotas in the 20's and 30's. As ethnicity increasingly came to determine a worker's craft and status, the success of this strategy became clear. Nowhere, though, was it as successful in dividing Europeans from each other as in dividing black from white. Marx's prophetic remark that, "labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded,"[7] was understood neither by the masses of white workers nor by its trade union leadership. It was well understood, though, by the bosses.

Stratification among the working class, both within and across ethnic categories, was solidified by the AFL craft unions. Hopes for the solidarity of industrial unionism with the emergence of the CIO were soon dashed, according to Aronowitz, by the mid-50's as these unions became virtually indistinguishable from their predecessors. Skilled workers, taking advantage of a higher degree of internal solidarity and mobility within the plants, became dominant throughout the CIO. They were able to demand and win separate elections with power far out of proportion to their numbers, separate seniority lists and wage differentials, and a plethora of job classifications based more on negotiation than technological need. In the UAW, they were even able to gain a veto on contracts through a separate ratification procedure. With the entrance of blacks and women into the factories, separate job titles and departmental seniority were established to reserve the semi-skilled jobs for Italian and Eastern European males. By thus collaborating in the intensification of the social division of labor, the unions historically betrayed the long-range interests of the workers.

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7. Karl Marx: *Capital*, Vol. I (New York: International Publisher; 1967), p. 301.

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Aronowitz's analysis of the trade unions shows that class collaboration is no aberration in their policies. It is, he argues in his most polemical chapter, inherent in the very nature of unionism since the destruction of the IWW. The words of the rank-and-file organizers collected in Alice and Staughton Lynd's *Rank and File: Personal Histories of Working Class Organizers* bear him out, adding a subjective dimension which only makes Aronowitz more convincing.

The growth of the trade unions since the New Deal reflects a recognition by "enlightened" sections of the ruling class that labor discipline and stabilization of labor costs necessary to long-range planning makes collective bargaining work to their own advantage. Besides reinforcing divisions within industries, the unions have cooperated in turning class struggle into intra-class warfare by agreeing to allow management to pass increased wages on to the consumers in the form of higher prices while they have abdicated control over working conditions, investment decisions and the obects of labor.

Unions today are no more responsive to the needs of the workers than any other institution in their lives. They are governed by a paid bureaucracy, dominated by experts, which seems to exist for little purpose other than perpetuating itself. Even when successful, struggles for internal reform have resulted only in the reproduction of the replaced regimes. Like any other bureaucracy, those which run the unions survive on a diet of secrecy, mystification, and monopoly of information and resources. Jordan Sims, an auto worker, remembers that, "I never saw a contract until I had been there almost 10 years. They (the UAW) said they didn't have contracts for rank-and-file people. I was there 18 years before I saw a union constitution. My president told me, 'You don't want to read something like this. It'll just mix up your mind and get you into trouble..."[8]

The wisdom of the IWW's refusal to sign contracts promising management anything, especially a probhibition against striking, is confirmed by the pattern of modern collective bargaining. No-strike provisions have usurped the right of the workers to withhold their labor. Bureaucratic grievance provisions have removed the enforcement of the contract from the rank-and-file, including the aggrieved worker. Management prerogative to control the conditions of production have reduced workers to extensions of the machines. Institution of the dues check-off has made it unnecessary for union leadership to even meet its constituency face-to-face. Today's labor contract is characterized by Aronowitz as "...more like a corporate contract or a mortgage agreement than anything else. In fact, it is a bill of sale."[9]

None of the organizers in the Lynds' book have become high-level union bureaucrats. To most of them, union recognition and collective bargaining spelled the beginning of the end for industrial democracy and workers' control. As Sims recalls it, "...Dues check-off...was the major sell-out. That's what bureaucratized our unions, made them big business and completely dissociated them from the rank and file...From that point on, I think, we got a no-strike agreement."[10] "Big business" is an apt characterization of contemporary unions. Their hierarchical structure, their bureaucratic operation, their investment policies leave little to distinguish them from the corporations whose workers they represent. Relations between the leader-

8. Lynd, p. 258.
9. Aronowitz, p. 220.
10. Lynd, p. 256.

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ship and the rank and file have been reduced to little more than the routine payment of an insurance premium. But many remember better days:"Without a contract (in the 30's), we secured for ourselves agreements...that were better by far than what we have today in the mill... You had a series of strikes, wildcats, shut-downs, slow-downs, anything working people could think of... If their wages were low, there was no contract to prohibit them from striking... If their conditions were bad,...the people themselves...would shut down..."(John Sargent, steelworker).[11] "We never had a check-off. We didn't want it. We said if you have closed shop and a check-off, everybody sits on their butts and they don't have to worry about organizing and they don't care what happens..." (Sylvia Woods, auto worker).[12] "The man who had a grievance came right along with me. We discussed it right in front of the foreman. He went with me to the next step... If we couldn't settle it there, we went to...the third step. He was always involved, he was always there, he knew exactly what his case was..." (Nick Migas, steelworker).[13]

The last several years have seen a resurgence of workers' demands for control over their lives, expressed in an unprecedented series of wildcat strikes over issues such as speedup, job monotony, and health and safety conditions. This reflects, according to Aronowitz, late capitalism's most explosive contradiction. The development of technology has now reached a point where knowledge has become in itself a critical productive force with the potential to eliminate scarcity. On the right, Daniel Bell claims that scarcity has indeed been abolished and that the technocrats have become the most critical class in "post-industrial society". On the left, a "new working class" of technicians has been discovered by Serge Mallet and others, and the contradiction between their capability to run production and their actual lack of control. Martin Sklar writes that the process of capital accumulation has reached its limit, that the search for new markets has begun a process of "disaccumulation" based on investment in waste. Marcuse's contention is that technology itself has become the major instrument of domination today.

Aronowitz argues that each of these theorists' perspectives is limited, that none correctly describes the central contradiction of advanced industrial capitalism. This contradiction is between the potential of post-industrialism to easily meet material and spiritual needs, and the actual state of social relations which survive from industrial capitalism's structure and ethos. These relation are those of hierarchy and authoritarianism, which are reproduced even in the most recently developed institutions by professionalism, and the profit imperative, which takes the form of consumerism. As long as hierarchy defines social relations, scarcity will always be re-created through the manufacture of false needs, and the world of "post-scarcity" postulated by the post-industrial sociologists will never emerge. The entire working class not just those engaged in newly developed occupations, are imprisoned by this contradiction, from technicians to secretaries, from production workers to teachers.

Mechanization of the office, for example, has produced a hierarchical division of labor which exceeds even that of the factory. White-collar workers find themselves as alienated from their labor as riveters on the assembly line. Absenteeism, lateness work errors, thievery and even sabotage, pose an increasing challenge to

11. Lynd, pp. 107-8.
12. Lynd, p. 126.
13. Lynd, p. 168.

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management In response, the number of supervisory personnel has multiplied (presently one to every 3½ office workers) and experiments in flexible scheduling have been initiated. (If workers only have to report for three 12-hour shifts each week, they can only be late three times.) White-collar workers are major consumers of the new leisure industries such as tourism, and of mass culture. Their only escape from the deadening routine of the office has been to allow their remaining social life to be transformed into a commodity.

The education and training large numbers of workers receive now raises their expectations of social mobility in a social structure which actually tracks them into dead ends. The resulting frustration is channeled by the system into an ideology of professionalism which reproduces in elitist form the old craft divisions of the industrial period. Their trade unions have played a greater role than ever before in solidifying stratification and preventing the emergence of class consciousness. Even among rank and file organizers in these unions, hierarchy assumes the status of moral imperative. Wayne Kenndedy, a government worker who the Lynds' portray as as example of contemporary radical organizing, describes as a radical demand, "career development for the clerks and protection of the professionals."[14] Teacher unions and government agencies have together developed "career ladders" for "para-professionals" which contain a bewildering number of rungs distinguished from each other more by seniority and pay than by job description.

No single industry typifies this development more than government bureaucracy, particularly at the federal level. Nor can any industry match the rate at which the role of the state has grown to be central to the economy. It has provided 50% of the total capital investment since 1932, and has consumed 20% of total purchases since 1945. Government presently employs one-sixth of the labor force. Concomitant with their realization that unions could prove to be allies in controlling labor unrest, the ruling class came to understand that expansion of the state's economic role could contain, for a time, the contradictions of capitalism. The proliferation of government bureaucracy since the New Deal reflects the system's need for mediation of conflicting capitalist interests, consumption of overproduction, employment of surplus labor, and control of potential deviance from approved modes of attitude and behavior. Social welfare programs fulfill the latter two functions. The defense industry, by providing a politically determined market with insatiable demand and a high rate of capital turnover, meets the former two.

Circulating among government bureaucracies, the military, and corporations, Aronowitz finds a new class of "professional servants" in the managerial ranks, a class which rose with the prevalence of the corporate form of organization and its resultant division of formerly entrepreneurial functions. No longer is any single individual responsible for raising capital, controlling production, keeping records and planning development. The professional servant class exists to supervise the performance of these tasks by departments comprised of subordinates. Although these managers may be paid partially in the form of stock, their control over the life of the corporation is limited to their assigned sphere. While their tenure of position is determined by higher officers of boards of directors, they are expected to conduct their lives as full-time representatives of the corporation.

14. Lynd, p. 243.

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Although this class neither owns nor truly controls the means of production, Aronowitz distinguishes it from the proletariat because of its dependence on the corporate form of organization and its lack of independent power. One wonders whether this distinction is overdrawn. There are several strata among the working class, as he defines it, who are dependent not only on corporate capitalism but on the state's role in maintaining it. These might include teachers and social workers, who are often heard to describe themselves as recipients of "middle-class welfare". A similar objection might be raised to his postulation of an "underclass" which has been excluded from the production process and has thus become dependent on the state. It may be argued, then, that consistency requires either the expansion or contraction of Aronowitz's definition of the working class.[15] While inclusion of the professional servants and of the underclass would not seriously effect his main theses, exclusion of all strata presently dependent on the state or on corporate forms would seriously undermine much that is original in his insights.

However this problem is resolved, we are left with a working class whose consciousness continues to be imprisoned by racism, sexism, and the social division of labor. Workers have been relegated to spectators of both their labor and their leisure, while social life has all but disappeared except in its commodity form. As teamster George Sullivan puts it, "Your car is a valuable possession, your girl friend is a valuable possession, and your money."[16] Yet one of Aronowitz's real contributions is his identification of the forces which create the conditions for transcendence of these barriers, forces which arise out of the contradiction between technological potential and alienated labor described above, and are creating a new revolutionary subject.

Young workers are decreasingly able or willing to sublimate autonomous drives through the work ethic when they are daily confronted with the material possibilities of abundance. Since realization of these possibilities requires little new knowledge, it is only the system of production for profit which prevents investment in the necessary technology. The twin specters of mass unemployment and low capital turnover have turned automation, once capitalism's greatest asset, into a threat.

The degree of technological innovation which has characterized twentieth century industrialization has already produced a significant decline in necessary labor-time. Childhood has been extended through schooling, which creates its own antithesis by purveying democratic ideology. The combination of the expectation of social equality with the actuality of hierarchy does not endear young workers to the system. After entering the labor force, workers find themselves with a significant amount of leisure time for the forst time in history. While mass culture attempts to use this phenomenon as a commodity market, it can only do so by legitimating erotic needs which are in contradiction to the authoritarianism of social institutions.

Two generations since the closing of immigration, the ethnicity which has historically divided the working class is losing its force. Young workers have not lived through European famine or the Great Depression; they share neither their parents' obsession with security nor their worship of consumer goods. Finally, the

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15. "The working class, as here defined, is composed of those engaged in the production and distribution of material goods and services who do not own or control the object of their labor or its uses..." (pp. 11-12).

16. Lynd, p. 216.

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institutions of socialization are weakening, turning out incomplete products and even enemies of the system. It is an unfortunate aspect of the Lynds' collection that none of these new workers are included. Perhaps the reason is that they are too contemporary for there to be a history of them. Aronowitz provides empirical documentation of his analysis by devoting a chapter to Lordstown's Vega plant, where the speedup, the technology, and the alienation of our most modern industry is confronted by an increasingly young labor force. Additional verification is provided by citing Ford's V.P. for Labor Relations, who points out that, between 1960 and 1968, the rates of absenteeism, disciplinary cases, and turnover more than doubled. This is attributed to lowered frustration tolerance, insufficiency of the traditional motivations to work, and "a growing reluctance to accept a strict authoritarian shop discipline."[17]

Out of the satisfaction of the old needs on which the work ethic was based, has arisen new needs for this generation of workers, needs which recall childhood play and autonomy, needs which can neither be created nor met by capitalism. The present structure of social relations has proven itself unable to satisfy workers' need for decent, rewarding work. "It is upon these new needs," predicts Aronowitz, "that the future will be fashioned."[18]

We should remember, though, that wildcat strikes are not the only available measure of worker alienation. Another is the support George Wallace found in his presidential campaigns. There is no guarantee that the alienation of the new workers will attract them either to socialism or to fascism. New mass-based organizations must be created with a new strategy if the working class is to realize its revolutionary destiny. Such an organization would have to explicitly challenge the principle of hierarchy, the social division of labor, and existing relations between work and play, freedom and authority. Aronowitz gives no blueprint for either the strategy or the organization; these will have to be developed in practice. He does, though, present some parameters, inadequate though they may be, which may help define what such a strategy and such an organization might look like.

First, he argues vehemently against the notion of a Leninist vanguard. No organization which reproduces the authoritarian relations of capitalist society can be expected to seriously challenge those relations.

Second, he suggests the possibility of independent shop-level committees which would fight for social demands and defend the workers' right to strike at any time. Incipient forms of these vehicles might be the "informal work groups" which auto worker Stan Weir describes as those existing teams "which work together daily in face-to-face communication with one another,...pushed into socialization by the needs of production."[19] An unanswered question is how such groups might coordinate strategy and develop leadership without bureaucracy and hierarchy; this question must be answered if they are to be effective.

In the public service realm, professionalism would have to be rejected, the humanization of services would become a major demand, and the old ethos of "service" would have to be understood as service only to the government under capitaliism, according to Aronowitz, who characterizes public worker strikes as

17. Aronowitz, p. 35.
18. Aronowitz, p. 413.
19. Lynd, p. 177.

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"strikes against the state."[20] Unless these dimensions are understood as a totality, though, old trade union consciousness places public workers' interests in conflict with those who depend on their services; actions in pursuit of such interests become attacks on the most oppressed of social groups. Government employees in welfare and education already understand themselves to be workers, but their unions have led them into the most reactionary of strategies.

Third, he calls for cultural action which would re-educate workers to discover the roots of social character, and the liberation of popular culture from mass culture to re-establish control over leisure. Here, the weakness of the examples offered show the difficulty of this project. Music, language and drugs might emerge as grass-roots expressions, but each is vulnerable to almost immediate co-optation into the commodity system. Probably the only instrument of popular culture which has preserved its truly autonomous character is graffiti, which the state has correctly determined is inherently subversive.

It does not detract from Aronowitz's argument that he has not prescribed any coherent strategy which can be followed like a cookbook recipe. He has reinterpreted the roots of existing conditions persuasively and has reformulated Marxist understanding of those conditions in a convincing manner. In so doing, he has challenged radicals to break with old forms and create a new world. It is only the practice of those radicals which will prove or disprove his analysis.

Charles Isaacs

20. Aronowitz, p. 250.

Jean Baudrillard, *Le Miroir de la Production, ou l'Illusion Critique du Materialisme Historique.* Tournai, Belgium: Casterman, 1973. 145 pp.

For some time now many of us have harbored the knowledge or at least the suspicion that Marxism is an inadequate perspective for the critical analysis of advanced society. We have toyed with syntheses, those of the Frankfurt School, of the Italian phenomenological Marxists, of the Freudo-Marxists, of the French existential Marxists without completely satisfying results.Radicals who prefer action to theory also bear witness to the impasse of Marxism by their frantic flight from advanced society under the changing banner of some Hero of the colonized peoples, Ho Chi Minh, Che Guevarra, Mao and now Stalin himself. In this conjecture Jean Baudrillard, in *Le miroir de la production*, has attempted a radical deconstuction of Marxism along with an alternative standpoint for today's radicalism.

In *Le miroir de la production* (1973), Baudrillard marshalls his earlier analyses from *Le systèm des objets* (1968), *La société de consommation* (1970) and *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* (1972) for a systematic critique of Marxism. His compelling conclusion is that Marx's theory of historical materialism, whether it is attributed to the *1844 Manuscripts*, to the *German Ideology*, to *Capital*, or to the entire corpus, is too conservative, to rooted in the assumptions of political economy, too dependent on the system of ideas that it seeks to overthrow to provide a framework for radical action. The fatal weakness in Marx comes not from

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his effort to outline a revolutionary social theory—Baudrillard does not dispute this imperative—but in the failure of historical materialism to attain this end.

For Baudrillard the conceptual grounds upon which Marx laid his critique of political economy were the "forms" of production and labor, forms that Marx did not subject to criticism and which were, in origin, those of political economy itself. When Marx unmasked an anthropology of needs and of use value behind the system of exchange value he was not transcending political economy but merely seeing its reverse side. Selecting representative quotes from the entire scope of Marx's texts, from the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* to the *Notes on Wagner*, Baudrillard argues that Marx's effort to plumb the "apparent movement of political economy" in order to reverse its theoretical flow in which use value derived from exchange value, far from dismantling political economy, only completed and "interiorized" it. Hence Marx's argument against "abstract labor" by reference to "concrete" labor still relied on the rationalist Western concept of labor itself. In both cases "social wealth" is still conceived in terms of a universal activity of man, i.e., labor, that imposes an arbitrary, rationalist intentionality on all human activity. Benjamin Franklin and Marx agree that "man" is a "tool-making" animal.

New Left theorists have nor often systematically interrogated Marx himself. The theory of historical materialism has not often been analyzed to see if its emphases and directions might not systematically obscure the contemporary social field. It is precisely this task that Baudrillard sets for himself and his judgment is severe: "...Marxism assists the ruse of capital. It convinces men that they are alienated by the sale of their labor power; hence it censors the much more radical hypothesis that they do not have to be the labor power, the 'unalienable' power of creating value by their labor." (p. 21) Far from transcending political economy, Marxism, to Baudrillard, strengthens and extends its most basic propositions. Man is conceptualized as a producing animal just as in political economy, except that Marx wants to liberate his productive potential. This still leaves us with a metaphor or "mirror" of production through which alone every aspect of social activity is intelligible. And so contemporary French theorists remain trapped in this conceptual cage: Althusser sees theory as a "production", Deleuze and Guattari give us an unconscious that is a "producer" of desire, the *Tel Quel* group refer to textual "production".

But it was political economy that erected the "phantasm," in Baudrillard's words, of labor as the human essence. To whatever extent Marx was able to demystify its liberal usage, to extract it from the hegemony of bourgeois rule, he still turned it over to the working class, imposed it on them, as their central means of self-comprehension. Baudrillard would like to liberate the workers from their "labor power," to have them, if they are to represent a radical alternative to the present system, think themselves under another sign than that of production.

Marx's concept of labor is, in its deepest levels, identified with that of political economy. Man is confronted by nature as a natural necessity which he must act upon. Man does this by investing nature with value, a value that he then extracts. The scheme is one in which labor power utilizes technology to compel nature to yield its riches for human enjoyment. Both political economy and Marxism are at one here. Baudrillard points out that there is no symbolic exchange in this perspective, there is no reciprocal play of meanings and acts. Labor and nature are both reduced to "values" that require the proper means (technology) to actualize.

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Political economy might idealize labor into an individualist morality whereas historical materialism might materialize it in a notion of fufillment: But both participate in the same anthropology of man seeking his telos in the conquest of nature, an anthropology that becomes mystifying when the system begins to create ecological catastrophes. Baudrillard argues that "By positing use value as the beyond of exchange value, one locks all transcendence into the single, internal alternative of the field of value. But qualitative production is now the realm of rational, positive finality; the transformation of nature is now the place of its objectification as a productive force under the sign of utility (the same is simultaneously true of human labor). Even before the stage of exchange value and of the equivalent time of abstract social labor, labor and production already constitute an abstraction, a reduction and an outrageous rationalization in the relation to the richness of symbolic exchange." (p. 34) A utilitarian hypothesis encompasses the human project and nature, one that is arbitrary and unjustified, in both political economy and its critique.

What is a stake in Baudrillard's critique of Marx is the gravitational center of the system of political economy. For Marx, the primary place (determinant instance) of capitalism is in the structure of the means of production and the relations of production. Over against political economy, which sought the deep structure of capitalism in the process of exchange value, in the determination of the price of the commodity through the "free" intercourse of demands and supplies, Marx shifted the center toward the "real" act of the production and the consumption of products. But for Baudrillard, in both cases the real logic is the same: it is the investment of things with value; it is the placing of a sign on a thing and the logic of this process of signification is the true essence of capital. The difference between Marx and political economy is not as great as their agreement. The Marxist critique unmasked the abstractions" of exchange value in favor of the "concrete" processes of use value, of production and labor. But Marx's concepts were not at all radical; they did not reach the root of the matter. All Marx did was to set forth the repressed side of the equations of political economy. Instead of the shadows of the marker place, we are sent to an equally obscure underside of the system: the place of production. Following this displacement of the center of the system to its "human side" Marx unravelled the threads of the entire social field through the "mirror of production," at the same time unmasking the exploitative nature of the system. Instead of the "justice" of exchange equivalence, we have the unjust extraction of surplus-value from the laborer, or, alternatively, the alienation of his life energies. In the process of Marx's analysis, however, the social sphere is filtered, inexorably, through the concepts of production and labor which become the unquestioned metaphysical reference points of social reality.

The problem is not that Marx is an economic determinist, that he does not value highly enough the "finer" aspects of human culture. It is not a question of replacing a "materialist" theory with an "idealist" one. Rather, the problem is that he did not penetrate the central logic of political economy, which is, to Baudrillard, its logic of signification. Marx theorized the origin of political economy as a transformation of the mode of production and relations of production. But there has been a second decisive change in political economy that Marx did not recognize and this involved a "process of social abstraction" that refers not to the commodity but to the sign. The chief merit of Baudrillard's thought is to articulate a critique of the political

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economy of the sign which he regards as the dominant social form of advanced capitalism. Political economy had generated its mode of signification from the outset, during the Renaissance, but Marx was unable to theorize this object because first, like Ricardo and the others, he was tied to the mirror of production, and, second, because his discourse, like theirs, was representational and hence incapable of seeing the radically new form of social exchanges.

Baudrillard employs the concepts of contemporary structural linguistics to develop his critique. Structuralists break down the linguistic sign into a signifier (a language term), a signified (an intended meaning), and a referent (an object pointed to by the signifier). Structuralists merely theorize the signifier, in search of its systematic quality, relegating the signified and the referent to an obscure horizon of their science. What they have been able to do is to show that signifiers have become abstracted from the subject (the signified) and from the social world of objects (the referent). While they claim this situation is natural and inevitable, Baudrillard argues that the essence of political economy is precisely this separation; the increasing autonomization of the signifier not simply in the realm of language but in all aspects of social exchange. Marx foresaw that capitalism would corrupt all values, moral, cultural, sexual, etc., by the force of the exchange value of the commodity. Baudrillard asserts that the strategy of the capitalist system is to generate this abstract structure of signification of which the commodity is merely one example. What happens in political economy is this: "the signified and the referent are now abolished to the sole profit of the play of signifiers, of a generalized formalization where the code no longer refers back to any subjective of objective "reality," but to its own logic. The signifier becomes its own referent and the use value of the sign disappears to the profit only of its commutation and exchange value. The sign no longer designates anything at all. It approaches in its truth its structural limit which is to refer back only to other signs. All reality then becomes the place of a semilogical manipulation, of a structural simulation. And whereas the traditional sign...is the object of a conscious investment, of a rational calculation of signifieds,here it is the code that becomes the instance of absolute reference." (pp. 108-109) Here we are beyond the stable bourgeois world of the nineteenth century where the consumer carefully weighed his money against the value of the commodity, carefully estimated his need against his resources. This stable, comfortable, knowable world where words clearly referred to things, where ideas represented reality, where values corresponded to needs, where commodities had unquestioned value, was the world of Marx and his thought. There could simply not be articulated a "revolution" in underarm deodorants, the incorporation (imaginary or real) of personal qualities through the purchase of commodities, or a "clean bomb". Baudrillard's critique of the sign allows him to render the situation of advanced capitalism with much more concreteness that traditional Marxism. Whole realms of contemporary protest (Blacks, Women, Youth, etc.) and critique (consumption, sex, language, the media, etc.) can be seen better in relation to the repressiveness of the code than in relation to the mode of production.The dramatic tension in the system comes from its difficulty in reproducing the code, while production itself becomes merely an ideological support of the system. (It delivers the goods).

In *Le système des objects*, Baudrillard analyzed consumption through a critique of the sign. The prejudice in favor of production as the active moment and con-

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sumption as passive originated with the political economy but was confirmed by Marx. This productivist ideology produces an absence in social theory: it cannot account for the articulated complexity of symbolic exchange in consumption. Baudrillard asserts that consumption is as "active" an exchange as production. In consumption there is an active appropriation of signs, not the simple destruction of an object. What is consumed is not simply a material object that satisfies an all too rational need, but a symbolic meaning in which the consumer places himself in a communication structure where an exchange occurs which is profoundly tied to the whole system of political economy. In order for the system to be reproduced there must be not simply the reproduction of labor power but the continuous reproduction of the code.

To Baudrillard, the present system of signs in consumption entails a serious distortion of human exchange. Under political economy, every level of social exchange is reduced from symbolic reciprocity to the "terrorism" of the "code." Baudrillard's critique of political economy leads not simply to another productivist ideology, but penetrates the system in a radical way: the abstraction from the full symbolic reciprocity of exchanges to the abstract, discontinuous manipulation of the code. It is the very genius of political economy, a genius that makes it immune to traditional Marxist critiques, that the signs exchanged in communication have no referent. Capitalism detaches the signifier from the signified, making the signifier its own signified. What is crucial about, say, a given underarm deodorant, is not that it has a given exchange value or a given use value, not that the workers who produced it were alienated or exploited. The secret of this commodity is that it can totally transcend all of these "referents," that it can become a totally detached object of exchange and that the person who consumes it can find a "meaning" in it to be appropriated that is totally divorced from the mechanisms of production and distribution. What is consumed is not a thing, laden with materiality and the complex cycle that finally derives from labor and nature, but purely and simply an element in a code.

There can be no internal contradiction endangering the system of monopoly capital because, as long as it controls the code, consumption can be indefinitely extended. There is no referent against which to define a finitude of needs because the code is its own referent and there is no end to the consumption of the code. As long as the code is not dismantled, there will be no difficulty for the system in getting workers to produce. Hence production is no longer the locus of the contradiction. In Baudrillard's analysis, the very form of social meanings becomes the central articulation of social theory, not as a pure form but as a structured form that is in movement, in transition. His theory avoids the mistake of having the theoretical model divided into aspects (economic, politics, ideology) that are those of the dominant ideology itself. He is adept at exposing the pitfalls of historical materialism when it seeks to comprehend pre-capitalist structures: for example, Godelier's stumbling acrobatics in his concepts of structure in dominance and determinant instance.

Yet, there are serious difficulties with Baudrillard's position. Over against the sign structure of political economy, its code, he counterposes something that he calls "symbolic exchange." Henri Lefebvre has argued that capitalism's structure employs "signals" increasingly in order to command integration and acceptance. By collapsing the signified into the signifier, the signal leaves no room for judgment or

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criticism, as in the statement, "We are in the Free World." He opposed the spoken word (*la parole*) to signals denoting a free structure of face-to-face discourse. Baudrillard moves in the same direction as Lefebvre, with many of the same difficulties. Advance capitalism creates places of "non-marked" terms (Blacks, Women, Youth, those on welfare). These groups are defined by their lack of responsibility, and, hence, they are at a "zero point" of the code where their speech does not count. Thus, they are in a truly radical position because they must oppose not simply an inequality in the code, but the code itself. And they do so, as in the French events of May '68, by a spontaneous resort to *la parole*.

In the act of speech there is a reciprocal giving and taking of meanings that transcend the abstraction and manipulation of the sign. There is a discharge of energy and meaning, a pure loss as well as a gain. This is the essence of symbolic exchange to Baudrillard. In political economy, on the contrary, there is never a loss; everything, even war, always results in an accumulation of value, a re-investment. This is the secret of capitalism as compared with other systems: its inexorable growth. Even when it tries to give some of its value away, to share power through participation becomes co-optation. Symbolic exchange is simply impossible as the system was designed precisely to destroy it through a long process of abstraction and separation. Yet, this celebration of *la parole* implies a false assumption about the total presence of the exchangers. It implies an ontology of centered presence; as Baudrillard says, "we are always totally there." Perhaps there is some dialectic of presence and absence that could account for miscomprehension as well as for symbolic exchange in social interactions. But Baudrillard had not given it to us.

There are strong echoes of the Frankfurt School in Baudrillard. He designates the same groups as Marcuse as the radical edge of the system; he employs Marcuse's concepts like repressive desublimation; and he speaks like Marcuse of a "refusal" as the revolutionary act. But there are still more theoretical affinities with Habermas. The resort to symbolic exchange is like the German's effort to complement the concept of labor with the concept of symbolic interaction, to addend Weber to Marx. Yet, with the background of French structuralism, Baudrillard is able to re-conceptualize the structure of society in a way in which Habermas is not. For the latter, symbolic interaction is added to labor, whereas for Baudrillard the whole theoretical object shifts in its nature. In a later phase of his thought, Habermas employs a notion of an ideal-speaking situation, enlisting a concept of communication in the critical theory of society. This, of course, is very close to the concept of *la parole* in Baudrillard and both suffer from serious weaknesses in political implication. In sum, there are deep confluences in two of the main centers of contemporary critical theory.

For Baudrillard, as for the Frankfurt School, there is a major problem of defining the limits of Marx's achievement. In France, Baudrillard's reading of Marx's texts is unusual in that it does not divide them up, favoring one group or another. Instead, he criticizes Marx on the basis of a claim against themes that exist throughout the corpus. While in the 1950s in France there was a fascination with the early texts, especially the *1844 Manuscripts*, by humanists, Catholics, existentialists and independent Marxists, the more recent trend, that of Althusser's circle, has been to reject the early Marx in favor of a "mature" Marx who is placed at a later and later date in his career. By stressing the unity of the texts, even if it is a unity to be criticized, Baudrillard returns us to an integral view of Marx.

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Baudrillard's attitude toward Marx is deeply ambivalent. In *Pour une critique de l'économie politique du signe* he placed himself squarely within Marxist thought as one who was pursuing further the critique of political economy. But in *Le miroir de la production* there are places where Marx is completely rejected. This comes through in the sections he devotes to epistemology, sections that conclude each chapter. His effort is to call into question the nature of the theoretical model of historical materialism, not simply its contents. The charge against Marx is not so much that he imposed his concept of production on precapitalist societies where it has no place, but that historical materialism becomes ideological when it forgets its historical limits and pretends to universality, an error that is characteristic of the whole tradition of Western thought. The problem is not simply one of a lapse of memory, a momentary theoretical slippage, but, Baudrillard argues, one that is implicit in the deepest epistemological premises of Marx. The first error derives from Marx's Hegelianism which asserts an overly absolute truth value to historical materialism because capitalism creates the conditions for universal, scientific knowledge. Ironically, this is the Althusserian position that attributes to Marxist knowledge the quality of finality. All of history can be objectively read by Marxism because of a favored historical position. With this claim Marxism gives up its own self-relativization: it is dependent upon a certain historical conjuncture, but at the same time, this conjuncture affords it an absolute priority over all previous ages. Marxism becomes ideological not where Althusser thinks, in its relation to practice, but in its truth claims, its scientificity. This problem has been raised many times before and needs no commentary here.

But there is a second difficulty that Baudrillard outlines. Marx erects a "model" of social structure and social change and Baudrillard objects to the analytic nature of Marxist concepts. Not only does capitalism fail to provide a standpoint for a universal theory, but it does not even offer the critical theorist the perspective from which to comprehend earlier societies. It is illegitimate for Marxism to project its notion of the mode of production onto earlier social systems. In this charge Baudrillard has placed himself on theoretical thin ice.

He wants to say that the Marxist model misses the radicality of the difference between earlier societies and capitalism as well as the radicality that would make a difference between capitalism and a future society all because of its analytic model. The model of production prevents a sighting of the symbolic nature of exchanges in primitive society; it absorbs that society into its own likeness and projects a vision of it back only in its relative difference, its underdeveloped mode of production. But to claim that this inadequacy in Marxism is due to the analytic nature of its concepts and to claim that a standpoint in the present, however critical, provides no basis for illuminating past structures courts the danger of pure relativism. The difficulty that Baudrillard presents is that of how to make radical discontinuities intelligible. He wants to claim a deep rupture between primitive society and political economy; but historical, analytic models make intelligible only continuities or relative differences.

For his own part, Baudrillard presents a history of social systems that in barest outline goes from pre-industrial societies of symbolic exchange, to political economy, and then to a third phase in which the full development of political economy is reached in the complete negation of symbolism. A fourth stage is implied in which we return to symbolism. This history is marked by discontinuity and itself implies an analytic of signification systems; but neither of these elements are theorized by

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Baudrillard. In other words, the incompleteness and obscurities of his critique of the epistemology of historical materialism return and emerge in his own standpoint. The direction of his critique is well taken: the inherent teleology in Marxism and its overly continuous model are open to attack. But Baudrillard has not shown us the way toward a discontinuous model that avoids finalizing all history in the present but allows for some sort of totalization, however fragmentary, that provides for a critical standpoint that can illuminate current practice. His failure here leaves him with only an empty invocation for a spontaneous overthrow of the code à la May, 1968.

All in all, Baudrillard's hypothesis of a critique of the political economy of the sign offers a promising direction for radical theory. It combines semiology with a notion of everyday life that increasingly appear to offer the best options for theoretical development.

Mark Poster

Bruce Brown, *Marx, Freud and the Critique of Everyday Life.* New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973. 199 pp. + index.

Bruce Brown has written a prologue to the reconstruction of social theory. It is a prologue because it does not make concrete the categories which it invokes to criticize the inadequacy of 'reflex Marxism.' Everyday life remains an abstraction at all times. Lacking is the connection with sensuous, historical reality that could give richness to the critique. Yet, the book has two distinctive virtues: first, it succeeds in rescuing Marxist thought from the straightjacket of orthodoxy by effectively arguing for the need to develop a theory of everyday life as an essential aspect of the theory of revolution. Brown is convincing in his argument that the old base-superstructure model neither corresponds to the actual situation in which the social struggle takes place, nor can it be helpful in explaining the complexity of modern capitalism. By emphasizing the importance of the need for a Marxist psychology as well as a theory of institutions that does not rely on a reflex or correspondence epistemology, Brown has suggested nothing less than a program for U. S. Marxist theory.

Second, his book deftly reviews the work of the various strands of neo-Marxian theory, weaving them together in terms of a single political position originating in the debates of post-World War I Marxism. Brown finds common ground in the work of the Frankfurt school, Wilhem Reich and such French Marxists as Henri Lefevbre who insisted that daily life could not be reduced to problems of ideology or economics. Moreover, Brown is fully aware of those tendencies within traditional Marxism that were dissatisfied with the received versions of the classical texts emanating from the theoreticians of both the second and the third internationals.

The substance of Brown's argument is straightforward. The reduction of the superstructure to the economic base characteristic of dominant Marxist traditions must be transcended if theory and practice are to be reunited. For Brown, the value of Marxism to revolutionary theory hinges on the success of this project. In the key chapter of his book, the one on critical theory, Brown asserts that the main institutions of daily life (family; schools; the work place, considered as an institution

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of social interaction rather than merely the production of the means of subsistence; language) "constitute a self-reproducing system of power which is imposed on all its members." The concept of a non-reducible institutional structure that not only mediates between the socioeconomic structure and the individual but constitutes a determinant of these, places Brown squarely within the theoretical framework of those, who, like Jurgen Habermas, deny the centrality of the dialectic of labor and the material life processes in general for determining the configuration of social reality. Even though Brown recognizes that, in the last instance, the dialectic of labor produces institutional culture, he wants to establish the autonomous status of culture. At the same time, he explicitly rejects Marcuse's effort to organically tie the process of social legitimation to the labor process. Marcuse's category, 'surplus repression,' which explains the repression of individual instinctual needs in the relatively affluent western capitalist system is praised by Brown as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for a theory that, on the one hand, refuses to rely on positive economic categories for explaining the production of consciousness, but on the other hand, is equally insistent that social consciousness cannot be explained in purely psychological terms.

For Brown, it is Habermas' notion of communicative action as the central mediation between the individual and society that constitutes the critical advance over both traditional Freudian and Marxian formulations of the relation between the external reality and self. Brown accepts the argument advanced by Habermas that language and metalanguage determine as much as reflect the relations of self and others, and, ultimately are constitutive of the formation of the self insofar as forms of communication are not merely part of the superstructure or the economic base but are themselves the substance of the institutions in which individuals are located and legitimate their activity. Thus, distorted communications and other forms of repressive symbolic interaction are not merely instruments for enacting social roles that are assigned to persons by the social structure. They have ontological status equal to that of the forces and relations of production. In fact, production relations are reproduced within the structures of communication and are produced by them.

In essence, communication loses its instrumental and reflexive character in Brown's theory and is located as the *force* of the institutional structures that are responsible for the social reproduction of labor. Communicative action need no longer to be grounded within the "physical organization of human beings" except as a biological precondition, nor within the labor process, except as a historical condition. Here Brown, together with Althusser as well as Habermas, abandons the unitary character of Marxism for a kind of pluralism. The notions "relative autonomy," "conjuncture," and "overdetermination," that are introduced by Althusser to solve the riddles presented by the failure of the socialist revolution since the first world war, are transformed by Brown into a new objective aspect of social reality possessing its own immanent dialectic. It follows that the emancipatory project outlined by Marx himself requires not only the transformations of the relations fo production by the revolutionary abolition of the forms of distorted communication that produce hierarchy and domination even as the structures of exploitation are removed within the labor process.

Brown is right to eschew the simplification of Marxist theory to problems of strategy and tactics of the revolutionary movement. With Reich, he rejects the view

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that revolutionary consciousness follows from the connection between the breakdown of the capitalist system's economic structures and the strength of revolutionary parties. Neither is it sufficient to accept the views of the council communists who were critical of the automatism of the breakdown theory of revolution, but located the formation of revolutionary consciousness in the struggles of workers in defense of their elementary interests at the point of production. Instead, explanations for the production of consciousness must take as their starting point the institutions of daily life, since these are chiefly responsible for the failure of the working class to act in its own class interest, even in the wake of ravages of their living and working conditions. Revolution requires the transformation of the institutions of microsocial life as a concomitant of the struggle to smash the class relations of capitalism, since these institutions succeed in reproducing capitalist social relations in the heads of the workers and in their personal relations even as the system is rendered powerless to maintain its rule.

Brown goes beyond Reich's emphasis on repressed sexuality and the authoritarian family as the repository of bourgeois character structures among workers themselves. He discovers in Lefevbre the necessary descriptive category for expressing the totalization of the personal and political within the authoritarian capitalist framework: the concept of the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption. "Henri Lefebvre has defined such a society—a society in which the apparent decline of the more brutal and violent forms in which compulsion has been exercized since ancient times have been superceded by more subtle yet incomparably more pervasive forms of terror which operate so as to create a convergence between compulsion and the illusion of freedom—as an 'over-repressive' society." The Bureaucratic Society that Lefebvre describes is sustained by the capacity of capitalist social production to satisfy the material needs of an everwhelming proportion of the underlying population in exchange for the self-repression by the masses of all other needs. The analysis presented in Brown's formulation is close to Marcuse's notion of one-dimensionality—with an important difference. The latent content of the idea of controlled consumption and of self-repression is the idea of choice. The working class is not only manipulated: it manipulates its own needs.

For Brown, in this concept, character structure and the socioeconomic requirements of the system of social production of a disciplined labor force are linked in the phenomenon of the spectacle: the phalanx of pseudo events in which the commodity form becomes the characteristic paradigm for all social and personal relations. In short, mass society has become the only objective structure in which the repressed needs are permitted expression.

On the other hand, the individual rebels against manipulation because there remain "non-repressive needs." Not content with the limits imposed on the cultural revolutionary project defined as the liberation of sexual needs, Brown implies, but never names those needs that remain unrepressed and go beyond sexuality. He seems to suggest that generalized self-management has become a new need among the underlying populations that can neither be accounted for by purely historical developments nor by innate biological structures and cannot be absorbed by bureaucratic capitalism because they are spiritual rather than material in character.

Missing in Brown's theory is a detailed discussion of the origins and configuration of the relatively unsocialized needs that have become the impulse behind the rise of the New Left. In fact, this omission raises a series of questions about the whole

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project, of which Brown is a part, that is attempting to "go beyond" Marxism. The precise relationship between communication action as a new level of reality and the production (or emergence) of needs that cannot be satisfied under the old social relations is asserted but not grounded.

Brown is critical of the Marxian explication of the production of needs as a concomitant of the revolutionization of the productive forces. He criticizes the formula: "as old needs are satisfied, new needs are made"; Marx's belief that the dialectic of labor, expressing simultaneously the interaction between humans and nature and within social relations, is likewise deemed inadequate. Similarly, the Freudian adaptation of the energy models of 19th century physics to human psychological action comes under critical attack since it does not draw out theoretically what therapeutic practice presupposes: that the repressed instinctual needs find their expression only in distorted communication action. According to Brown, these communications modify and redirect the instincts themselves. For Brown, as well as Habermas, the self-production of humans is a process of symbolic interaction as much as material intercourse. But the ground for this innovation only has a single justification: the need of the prevailing mode of production for a system of legitimations. Thus ideologies become a material force because they "grip the masses." For Claus Mueller, a student of Habermas, the crisis of capitalism finds its truth in the crisis of legitimation rather than the breakdown of its technical rationality. As Habermas himself has argued, technique and science become themselves ideology, thus collapsing the distinctions between base and superstructure.

Yet these insights are still not sufficient to warrant the assertion that the Marxian and Freudian paradigms require supercession not merely synthesis, as Marcuse and others have attempted to effect. Each of them can explain the institutional matrix without altering the structure of their theoretical explanation. The concept of the bureaucratic society presupposes the manipulation of needs by highly centralized institutions of corporate and state power. These institutions can be viewed as the administrative side of class domination. The attempt of the Frankfurt school to argue for a psychology while retaining the essential Marxian categories is not sufficiently treated in Brown's work. Instead, he proposes to follow the work of Habermas in rejecting the dialectic of labor as the source of the self-production of human interaction through the "transformation of surplus instinctual energy into social labor." Brown's critique of the solutions advanced by Marcuse, Adorno and Horkheimer rests on his assertion that the concept of surplus repression may account for the origins of the institutional structures of modern society but is not sufficient "for the reconstruction of the dialectic of institutions." Yet, the concept "communicative action" lacks specificity in Brown's explication. Its dialectical grounding is unclear since it does not presuppose the interaction of forms of communication with other types of social relations posited by the Marxian categories. Thus, the dialectical character of communication seems to be relatively self-contained in Brown's formulation in practice, even though he rejects such autonomy in concept. Although he acknowledges the necessity of finding the ways to link the dialectic of labor with the unspecified categories of communication, in the end, the work remains undone.

There can be no critique of Brown's work entirely within the scope of a critique of Habermas. In contrast to Brown, who remains committed to the dialectic of labor as

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a necessary condition of a theory of human action (and therefore remains revolutionary in intention), Habermas lapses into structuralist position insofar as he attempts to find "the invariant regularities of social action as such." We find these invariant regularities in "knowledge-constitutive human interests," that is, social action that is mediated by self-reflected interest. Self-reflection, the mediation between subject and object in both Hegel and Marx, now becomes an autonomous "invariant" of social reality. For Habermas, the stripping of the rationalizations of social action is not undertaken in order to reveal the class interest lurking behind them; class interests based on differential ownership and control over the means of production cannot replace the work of unlocking the configuration of repressive communication. Habermas' program is for a dialectic of ideology as such in which forms of domination can be suppressed and surpassed relatively independently of the class structure. Domination thus assumes an extra-social meaning, if by social we mean the matrix of production relations, including institutional life. The "forces" of communication no longer have reference to the unfolding of material processes, but are themselves unfolding.

A self-consciousness that does not depend on the recognition of the instinctual needs mediated and shaped by social relations is a step backward from Hegel, not to mention from Marx. Hegel attempted to resolve the issues raised in the *Phenomenology* concerning the question of human freedom by leaving the realm of ideas and embedding his analysis in the configuration of social reality. *The Philosophy of Right* makes clear that the preliminary nexus of self-consciousness congealed in the forms of the 'unhappy consciousness' could only by resolved by the appropriation of property by the self within the family, civil society and the state. For Hegel, the forms of thought were at best a moment (therefore, the untruth) of freedom. It was only in the objective structures of human relations that the ethical life could be found. In his apparent return to subjectivity, Habermas reasserts bourgeois subjectivity, that is, the notion that the individual who thinks is capable of achieving freedom.

Bruce Brown's attempt to integrate Habermas into a new dialectical paradigm must be taken seriously for it is the first American effort to construct a sufficient "way of seeing" that is neither mechanistic nor voluntaristic. His failure is only relative to the task. More important, he has suggested lines of inquiry that are essential for those wishing to travel the same road.

Stanley Aronowitz

Maurice Godelier, *Rationality and Irrationality in Economics*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972. xlii + 326 pp.

Despite Maurice Godelier's desire for philosophical significance, this collection of his essays stays for all practical purposes on the terrain of the social sciences, as conventionally defined, in particular of economics. The question which forms the theme connecting all these pieces—"What is the rationality of the economic systems that appear and disappear throughout history..., their hidden logic and the

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underlying necessity for them to exist, or to have existed?" (vii)[1]—brings with it a second basic question, what Godelier calls that of the "rationality of economics," i.e., the scientific status of economic theory. A theory capable of assessing relative rationalities must both encompass several economic systems and differentiate between them. Godelier examines the pretentions of bourgeois (post-classical) economics to provide such a theory, and concludes that it is useful only as a supplement to Marxism, which alone can serve as the rational basis for evaluating the rationality of different economies.

As Godelier points out, the "twofold need, theoretical and practical, to compare different economic systems was manifested at the very birth of political economy and even constituted the reason why it was born." (249) What has been called since Marx's time "classical" political economy claimed to demonstrate the principles of a social organization of production and distribution in harmony with human nature and therefore with the demands of reason. These principles provided theoretical weapons against the *ancien régime*, spelling out a program as well as a description of economic facts. The development of "neoclassical" (marginalist and general equilibrium) economics in response to a maturing capitalism struggling not with the residues of feudalism but with the aspirations of the working class, continued along this "dual path" of science and ideology. Economic science was—is—supposed to lay bare the requirements of any economic system, as well as to demonstrate the superiority of capitalism in meeting them.

What, we must ask at this point, is an economic system? What is "economics" the science of? Godelier takes as basis for discussion[2] two definitions, the *formal*—economics as the general theory of purposive action—and the *substantial*—economics as the study of the production of the material wealth of society. The first is Lord Robbins's classic definition: "the science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses." Here "economic" is practically a synonym for "rational." It is not hard to show (and Godelier does it well enough) that while a discussion of "economics" in this sense may or may not be interesting, it substitutes as analysis (or at any rate a formal description) of "economizing behavior" in any sphere of action, for a theory of some particular set of social institutions and processes that we intuitively call "the economy."

The use of this formal principle to discover the rationality of capitalism in its utilization of the quantification afforded by the market price system to calculate the most efficient use of resources in any endeavor, does not permit an exit from this situation. "Gainful activity" in capitalism can only be contrasted favorably with the "tradition-bound, irrational" activity of earlier social forms if we define "gain" in terms of "value produced"—i.e., if we assume the structure of the capitalist system. Thus this argument for capitalism's superior rationality, Godelier shows, boils down merely to a contrast of the values directing productive activity in this system, with the different values at work in other systems. There is in fact no logical connection between the formal definition of economics and the evaluation of (as yet undefined) economic systems: "in order to obtain scientifically valid knowledge regarding any

1. Numbers in parentheses throughout refer to pages of the work under review.
2. Primarily in the first and last of these essays, on "The Theme" and "The Rationality of Economic Systems."

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real economic behavior it is essential that, *quite independently of this commonplace recognition* of the general *form* of intelligent behavior..., the *real* subject-matter of economic science (that is, what differentiates what is economic from what is political, religious, etc.) be defined, that the specific features of the various economic systems that have appeared in history be known, together with the hierarchy of values in a given society." (21) It is only the latter which will afford comprehension of "a 'social rationality' of which...economic rationality is only one aspect" and so allow us to compare social systems on this dimension.

So, in search of this definition we look to the sense of "the economic" as the production, distribution, and consumption of goods. The problem with this, according to Godelier, is that it leaves out "services" such as musical performance, religious rites, etc. On the other hand, "the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services" is also found unsatisfactory, seemingly including too much. "If the production of services is economic, then the economic sphere absorbs and explains the whole of social life, religion, kinship, politics, the acquiring of knowledge." (22) This observation suggests interesting ideas—one is reminded of Marx's conception of "mode of production" as "mode of life"—but not to Godelier. Whether or not he has a care for the academic specialities dealing with religion, politics, etc., as there is a division of "social science" called "economics" there must apparently be a discrete subject matter for it to study. Godelier deals with his problem therefore not by questioning the category of "the economic" but by defining it as "both a domain of activities of a particular sort (production, distribution, consumption of material goods...) and a particular aspect of all the human activities that do not strictly belong to this domain, but the *functioning of which involves the exchange and use* of material means." (257; compare 22-23) With one stroke the "economic aspect" of services is taken account of, while "the economy" is both preserved as a specific domain and shown to be a part of an interconnected set of structures in terms of which the greater "social rationality" can be defined.

Such an attempt to provide a rational basis for economics, and to restore "the status of political economy as a science" (9) (as well as that of the other "humane sciences" which must be "rescued", pp. xii-xiii), is quite the contrary of Marx's appraoch to these questions. For Marx, political economy was of necessity an enemy country, and he meant his major works as contributions not to this "science" but to its *critique*. It is odd, therefore, that it is in Marx's works that Godelier discovers a solution to the difficulties of modern social science. *Capital* is, in his view, both a contribution to economics, as containing a theory of capitalism and a general "framework for a comparative theory of economic systems" (65), and a theory of society as a system, a "structure of structures" of social activity (economic, political, religious, etc.), capable at once of explaining historical development and of providing grounds for its evaluation.

This comes out in the long essay on "The Structures of the Method of *Capital*," supplemented by shorter pieces on the relation between value and price. (There is also a short essay on—once again!—the early vs. the late Marx, which is not bad but not very profound either.) Godelier distinguishes two methods in *Capital* (though in a later, corrective essay he speaks of a method which is "both one and multiple," a "*synthetical* unity of different approaches" [196]): the "hypothetico-deductive" and the "dialiectical." By the *first* of these he means the abstraction of the categories

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and functional relations between them[3] necessary to characterize the economic system. These are then used as the basis for the "deduction" of the laws of the system, of "the modes of connection between variable structures." (142) This takes the form of the "deduction of certain categories"—profit, interest, rent—"from the category of surplus value" (143) in turn derived from "exchange-value" and the concept of "commodity."

It is unclear why Godelier speaks here of "deduction"; what it *means* when he says that the relationship between the categories "is a 'logical' one, that is, it shows the necessary relationship between the structures." Godelier himself seems unsure of what he means; his style, which is often annoyingly vague, confused, and full of philosophical and economic jargon, sinks to such formulations as "The method is thus highly expressive of the approach by theoretical thought to that which is being thought about...thus...consists in deducing structures that are derived from an originating structure, basing these derived structures upon this original structure..." (143) (It is in this context also that he invents the idiotic notion of "logical time," by which he appears to mean relations of interaction and thus of explanation.) It is in general about time that people stopped throwing words like "logic," "deduction," and "necessity" around; outside of the areas in which they have acquired very precise meanings they have proved to be very peculiar and problematic notions indeed, and not at all suitable for making things clear.

As Marx pointed out in the Afterword to the second German edition of *Capital* I, the way in which he wrote his book may indeed make it "appear as though we had before us a mere a priori construction." In fact the realtion between his categories is not logical or deductive, but explanatory. Marx does not isolate by abstraction from their real contexts certain concepts (or "structures") which can be shown to be logically related. He makes use of various concepts to discuss the same object—structure, if you will—at varying levels of abstraction.

By misunderstanding the relation of the more abstract and the more concrete levels of description in Marx's work, by thinking of explanation as a portrayal of a relationship between structures rather than as a relationship between concepts that allows us to talk about a structure, Godelier makes an explanation of the real links between the categories impossible. This can be seen in his analysis of the relation between *profit* and *surplus value*: "Profit is thus both distinct from surplus-value and identical with it. The distinction is due to the fact that profit is a structure that arises from the collective, overall functioning of the macro-economic mechanism, that is, from the real system of capitalism....Surplus-value, however, is a structure that arises at the micro-economic level, at the level at which the capitalist enterprise functions (being imagined as independent of the effects of its relationship to the

3. It seems important to Godelier to claim that such procedures lead "necessarily" to the employment of mathematics in economic theory. He is, however, unable to suggest any significant use of mathematics here, telling us only that with suitable models "curves...can be constructed, and their intersections...studied," and demonstrating that he is acquainted with the words "stochastic" and "probabilist" (140) as well as with related buzzwords like "cybernetic" and "operations research" (313). This romance with mathematical gadgets is only an aspect of Godelier's desire to integrate Marxism "into the body of most up-to-date economic theories, using the most elaborate formal tools" (159)—i.e., into an area of academic production which today is itself beginning to admit the uselessness of sophisticated tools to overcome its lack of theoretical content.

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system as a whole." (145) In fact Marx imagines nothing of the sort, since it is basic to the capitalist system in his conception that the behavior of any firm can be described only in terms of the constraints imposed on it by the system as a whole. This is why the object of research in *Capital* is never "the behavior of the firm" but, in Marx's terms, "the laws of motion of capital."

It is only another move in Godelier's pointless and fruitless attempt to combine bourgeois economics and its Marxist critique when he substitutes the academics' distinction between micro- and macro-economics (i.e., price theory and aggregate analysis) for Marx's completely different concepts of "capital in general" and the "the many capitals." The many capital units of the real world form a system: the behavior of each is subject to and can't be understood without reference to its relations with the others through the capital and commodity market. It is this "systems" character of the aggregate of capitals which gives the notion of "capital in general" scientific meaning. Thus in Volume I Marx studies the system, "capital in general," ignoring the differences between types of capital (productive, commercial, financial) and variable properties like organic composition and turnover time. "Capital," however, must be represented not as a "whole" but as a system of individual firms, for "the system" is no residue aside from the firms and their interactions. It is this representation of "capital" for analytic purposes by an ideal or average capital, interacting with others therefore identical to it in type, organic compositions, etc., that gives the appearance of an investigation of "the behavior of the firm," fooling many others besides M. Godelier.

It is precisely because the discussion throughout the first two volumes of *Capital* concerns not individual firms but ideal representatives of "capital in general" that this discussion is carried on using the categories of "value" and "surplus value," both aggregative concepts (the first denoting, roughly, optimally allocated social labor time, and the second, that portion of the first not needed for the reproduction of the initial conditions of production). These categories apply to the third volume as well; Marx's procedure is to add specifications to his model, making the capitals represented in it less ideal, in order to show how the value relations operate as constraints on the system *through* the price relations established in competition. The least one can say is that Godelier has gotten things backwards: the movement from the abstract of Vol. I to the concrete of Vol. III is more like a move from macro- to micro-economics than, as Godelier would have it, the other way around, as it is only in Vol. III that price-formation (and the category of profit) it discussed. But in fact, by defining "capital in general" as "many capitals" plus their interactions, Marx's theory escapes this split between "macro-" and "micro-" levels of analysis which plagues post-Keynesian economics. "Value" is for Marx both an aggregative concept and one which, in the form of exchange value, is used to analyse the interaction of capitals with each other. Similarly for "surplus-value," definable only (as a fraction of value) in terms of "the collective, overall functioning of... the real system of capitalism" and denoting the *same* reality as "profit," though at a different level of abstraction.

Godelier's incomprehension of Marx's actual analytic procedure in *Capital* is responsible for his description of the systems-theoretical and developmental character of Marx's model of capitalism as the product of a *second* method, the dialectical, which "serves to analyze the mutual relations of the economic structures and the overall functioning of the capitalist system" and so "serves to analyse the

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ways in which the capitalist system moves." (186) His description of this method is strikingly contentless, even in a book as sophomoric-pretentiously written as this one. Having put the analysis of the basic categories and their interrelations into the "hypothetico-deductive" method, nothing is really left for the "dialectic" except the bare assertion (stretched to fill many pages) that it "explains the structure of the system's movement," "reveals the basis of the dynamic of the system," etc., etc. Godelier himself finally responds to the mess he has made of his "two methods" with the thought that "the use of assumption and of deductive reasoning is...internal to the dialectical method of economic science." (210)

In fact, as Marx points out in the Afterword to *Capital* cited above, the notorious "dialectical method" is nothing but the application of scientific thinking to a "dialectical" object, or as we might say, to the study of a dynamic system. The distinction, fatal to bourgeois economics, between "static" and "dynamic" aspects has no place in Marx's model. "Value" itself is defined by Marx in a dynamic way, not as *labor* but as *socially necessary* labor, the qualifying phrase denoting a variable character. It is this aspect of the value concept that makes it useful for the description of the system's tendency at once to development and to crisis, as the continuous increase in the productivity of labor both is a necessity for the many capitals locked in competitive struggle and spells their periodic convulsion through the fall in the profit rate it brings with it.

For Marx, "value" is a category with meaning only for capitalist society (unlike, for instance, "labor time" which of course applies to all social systems). This theoretical construct was created to explain the organization of production and distribution in a system ruled by the principle of private accumulation. It therefore has no meaning in other systems, particularly a centrally controlled one, since the question—how is labor allocated in a competitive, private-profit system?—which it is designed to answer does not arise. Godelier's misunderstanding of *Capital* is, therefore, only the more evident when he finds in the theory of value "the fundamental assumption on which is based not merely the theory of capitalism but all rational economic science." (155) To Godelier's eye the labor theory of value provides a general theory of economics because on its basis "the different systems of production appear as realized possibilities, as particular cases of that general relation between man and himself and between man and the world which is called *labor*." (157) We are here at the standpoint of the classical economists, projecting categories peculiar to bourgeois society (value, surplus value) onto a reality independent of social form (labor, surplus-labor)—exactly the fault we found M. Godelier waxing so wroth about before. As Marx pointed out in *Capital*: "Political Economy has indeed analysed...value and its magnitude, and has discovered what lies beneath these forms. But it has never asked the question why labor is represented by the value of its product...such formulae appear to the bourgeois intellect to be as much a self-evident necessity imposed by Nature as productive labor itself...."

Identifying "labor"—the abstract relation of "man" to "nature" (155)—with "value," Godelier does not hesitiate to apply the latter concept to the state-directed mode of production ruling in Russia, China, etc., which he follows convention in calling "socialist" economies. For Godelier the theoretical distinction between value and price can express both (in capitalism) "the impossibility of consciously adjusting production to demand" and (in "socialism") "the possibility of...consciously

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adjusting production to the objectives of social consumption decided on by the planner." (239) It seems curious to apply one and the same set of categories to such diametrically opposed processes. But Godelier is on the hunt for the "universal laws of economics" sought for so long by his fellow economists. These he finds in his incoherent pseudo-Marxism, which "enables us to build a model of socialist development no less well than one of capitalist development, and...also enables us to work out the theory of pre-capitalist production processes." (157)

Given the discovery of economic invariants, we can now differentiate societies by the way in which the economic system is connected with the other "social structures," so that "depending on the particular type of society, one structure or another holds the foreground of the social scene as the dominant one." (98) This allows us, finally, to define economic rationality as the performance of the economic substructure most in harmony with the requirements of the system as a whole. (see 99, 316)

The intellectual ancestor of such a view is evidently not Marx, but the academically conventional theory unveiled by Parsons and Smelser in *Economy and Society*. Godelier, however, grafts it on to "dialectical materialist" orthodoxy by declaring all social systems subject to a necessary correspondence of productive forces (technology) and relations of production. It is the latter which, so far as I can tell, determine the hierarchy of structures which characterizes a particular system.[4] So his proof of the superior rationality of "socialist" over capitalist society is given not in terms the hierarchies of substructures supposedly defining the "social rationality" specific to these systems, but in terms of the traditional "contradiction between productive forces and relations." That is, the class structure of capitalism, specifically "the private ownership of the productive forces," conflicts with the developmental tendency of the "structure of the productive forces (their more and more advanced socialization)." (79) "Socialist" social relations, in contrast, are found as usual in such accounts to correspond ("functionally"—a favorite buzzword here) to these forces.

As an historical product, created through the development of capitalism itself, "this correspondence is entirely independent of any *a priori* idea about happiness, Man's essence, 'true' freedom, and so on." (82) We have left the philosophical terrain inhabited by the young Marx behind, and stand with the old on the firm ground of science in this proof of socialism's superior rationality. But the old Marx, at any rate, claimed not (Godelier says he did) to show "the necessity and superiority of a new mode of production" (82), but to show its superiority *for its potential creators, the working class*. The "scientifically proved" rationality of socialism has no charms for the bourgeoisie, and not because of their resistence to scientific thinking. The Marxian critique of economics included in its attack this aspect of apologetic for one social system in conflict with another.

For Marx the universals of the production process (basically: people, nature, tools, social organization) an universals apply identically to all systems and so can in principle not be the basis for any comparison of rationality. Nor do they allow us to

4. Actually this is to make Godelier's argument more coherent than it really is. His procedure is to shift back and forth between the system-of-structures and the forces-and-relations conceptions without any serious attempt to relate them, in the opening essay; in the concluding one, he leaves out his bow to "orthodox Marxism" altogether.

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define "the economy" as a subsystem of "society." By the distinct notion of "mode of production" Marx means the totality of relations by which a given society organizes its reproduction. *Economics* for Marx applies only to one particular mode of production, capitalism. The whole point of his life-work, the critique of political economy, was to show that the claims of the economists to have discovered universal laws of social life were false, that the so-called economic necessities amount merely to the apparent permanence of a system of social relations of domination and servitude that can last in the consciousness of rulers and ruled alike only so long as the latter are not moved to destroy the real chains that bind them. The system the workers create will run on vastly different lines, and require different concepts for its comprehension. And even within capitalism, as soon as they begin to struggle for their interests against those of capital, the workers' experiences lay the basis for another way of looking at this system itself than that represented by economics, which is thus shown to represent not abstract "science" but the scientifically developed viewpoint of the capitalist class.

The correspondence between social relations and productive forces to be achieved by socialist revolution meant for Marx not the liberation of technological progress but the control of the producers over their own activity. Just as the laws of economics are for Marx really a fetishization of the social power relations peculiar to one social formation, it must not be forgotten that for this thinker "the greatest force of production is the revolutionary class itself." (*Poverty of Philosophy*) Marx's effort to destroy the workers' belief in their subjection to immutable laws of economics or social organization is wholly in contradiction with Godelier's point of view. But this is because Marx's aim was participation in "the liberation of the working class by the workers themselves," whereas Godelier's is to the "socialism" achieved in the Stalinist societies of the East, as well as to the theoretical difficulties of social science professors in the West. His book, far from making any contribution to Marxism, is only a reflection on the academic level of the current entente between capitalism and the party state-run systems. The translation, by Brian Pearce, is very good; but it must be said that it represents a wasted effort.

Paul Mattick, Jr.

Lee Baxandall, ed., *Radical Perspectives in the Arts*. London: Penguin, 1972.

Baxandall begins his Foreword to this anthology with Webster's definition of "radical" and points out that "fundamental," not "extremist," is its synonym. What, then, is a "radical perspective"? How can something as seemingly arbitrary and external to its object as a perspective be established as fundamental or claim intelligibly to deal with the "root aspects of aesthetic objects"? The first two words of Baxandall's title encapsulate the hoary dichotomy in aesthetic theory between integrally organic, or at least internally organized and focused, coherence (form) on one hand and denotative, linear statement (content) on the other. This is the dichotomy between art and science which for many critics is an unbridgeable abyss.

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In aesthetic theory itself, it is the unsurpassed split between the art medium (linguistic or otherwise) and its own language, which apparently cannot be adequate to art any more than Kantian reason can be adequate to the unknowable noumenal flux. Yet, for reasons which often end up far from clear, it persists in trying to be.

With his critique of the external object of knowledge, Hegel points toward the overcoming of this dichotomy. With his critique of alienation, fetishism, and ideology, Marx originates a truly radical social theory whose radicalism overcomes the relativistic stance of a "perspective": the roots of the phenomena criticism deals with are also its own, and thus it is a practical process of dialectical self-development through the social relations it criticizes. It is widely agreed that what makes art artistic is (approximately and generally) a unity or totality which is to some significant extent autonomous or self-determining, somehow uniquely truthful—even radical—in the integrity of its immanent—even dialectical—development. That this aesthetic quality bears great similarity to the dialectical critical stances of Hegel and Marx is no accident since the relation is internal: aesthetic problems as such were important and even formative concerns of both men. And similarly, for Kant the aesthetic process lay at the root of the broader mediation of freedom and necessity in the faculty of judgment. Thus the dichotomy implicit in the first two words of Baxandall's title seems to be an extremely important problem for radical aesthetic theory. It even appears that for aesthetic theory to confront this problem critically would be precisely its radicalism, as a critique whose difficulty lies in dealing with cultural phenomena which can somehow call alienation itself into question in their modes of expression, in their society, and in theory which tries to be adequate to them.

But neither Baxandall nor most of the articles he has selected take this dialectical stance. There is a recurrent tendency—reaching a nadir in Lukács' article—to abandon the critique of alienation in favor of merely pointing at alienation in art as an inadequate "reflection" of "reality": the whole problematic of modern aesthetics is abandoned—along with the possibility of overcoming it—in favor of a pre-Kantian rationalism which, if followed out, degrades art as a worthlessly or dangerously distorted mode of cognition (or, of propaganda). This failure of criticism, whose social roots in various critics here are not discussed, is both cause and effect of a serious inability or unwillingness to come to grips with works of art in their dialectical complexity. In fact, few essays make any attempt to discuss specific works in enough depth to be more than superficial or, at best, to make anything but undeveloped *ex cathedra* statements about them. We are presented with a series of uncoordinated "perspectives" on art which, as such, almost never get closely involved in it: and how can such criticism reach its roots?

This failure is manifest not only in most of the essays but also in Baxandall's organization of the anthology. Authors range from Carl Oglesby to Georg Lukács, from Herbert Marcuse to Fidel Castro, from Jean-Paul Sartre (in a symposium) to the Cultural Theory Panel of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. Only by examining the list of acknowledgments can one discover some common groung in these articles besides their imputed radicalism: all were written during the 1960s. Their uneven quality, cultural diversity, various methodologies, and multiplicity of concerns, however, make their chronological relationship inconsequential. What is the purpose or the fundamental unity of this anthology? Baxandall says that it "is addressed to the promotion of radical

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perspective [sic] in the arts, which is understood to be synonymous with a concern for fundamental or root aspects of aesthetic objects and activity and experience." "Root aspects" is indeed the same *oxy moron* as "radical perspectives"; but Baxandall says nothing about why he is "promoting" them or it.

Perhaps the conceptual root of this vagueness can be found in the ways he characterizes "the perspective." After summarizing several problems around which it is oriented, Baxandall says that "The radical perspective is more complex than our experience can totally encompass; but the following pages give a certain idea of its scope and elements." *The* perspective is something essentially achieved or founded already ("enduring") which, however, can only be assembled as a patchwork because Baxandall cannot get to the root of it. We are left with perspectives; but there is nothing radical in the conception of the volume and often not much in the articles. "Needless to say, perhaps, this volume is too brief to allow a comprehensive elaboration of any of the particular matters of radical concern." But the problem is qualitative, not quantitative: the book is poorly conceived. What is needed in any radical critique is a comprehensive, concrete elaboration of some *particular* matter, which could surely be accomplished in 388 pages. "Perspectives" actually means pseudo-critical ideologies, whose inadequacy is revealed perhaps most strikingly when they are imposed on two particular modes of activity: revolutionary praxis and art (as Sartre's remarks on the concept of "decadence" show). What is interesting in this book are the few attempts to cast off a "perspective" in doing precisely what art demands: actively grasping it in its radical coherence as a cultural phenomenon instead of gazing upon it as an object through shades of abstraction.

Perhaps the last part of Baxandall's title is a silent acknowledgment of this problem. If we take "*in* the arts" literally, only a few of the articles belong in the book because only they deal with radicalism as it is expressed in works of art, in artistic activity, or by artists: Marcuse's essay on the liberatory potential of Form, Darko Suvin's on Brecht's aesthetics, Carlos Fuentes' on *Moby Dick*, John Illo's on *Areopagitica*, and to some extent Arnold Kettle's on "The Progressive Tradition in Bourgeois Culture." If the book were what its title claims it might be better, as the quality of these articles generally suggests. What Baxandall means, however, is more like "radical perspectives in aesthetics;" and some of the remaining articles do concern theory as such (the Panel's, Garaudy's, Marcuse's, Berger's, and Morawski's). But only rarely is the attempt made to unify the two aspects of the ambiguous title in dialectical critical theory: and this is fundamental for radical aesthetics. Instead, the articles about rather than in the arts tend to fall into two groups: most of them apply externally derived theories to art and often come up with drearily predictable negative or programmatic judgments; a few remain immersed in aesthetic form or experience to the extent that, even though they are much more promising than the former essays, they tend to lose their critical stance. Of the latter, Marcuse ends up sounding like any number of bourgeois critics (art is intrinsically vicarious, cathartic, an "enduring value, stored in the great treasure house of culture"); and Morawski tries to define "art" by abstracting "the attributes of art which, notwithstanding continual modification, have stood up until today": he finally concedes rather than develops the point that "the definition. . . rests upon a sociological substratum." It is hard to determine how far the one-sidedness of most of these essays is attributable to their authors and how much it results from their

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presentation in a context whose incoherence militates against critical dialogue and the full development of problems.

The confusion in the book's conception and its corresponding critical failure is unintentionally parodied in the style of Baxandall's own concluding contribution, which is composed of two fictional arguments (conservative and libertarian). Lyrical bombast slams up against theoretical assertion: "We have today the chance to grow joyous naked, to continuously discover and invent ourselves in the concerted white heat of expressive realization"; "*Radical* is thus to be understood in its original sense: 'going to the roots.' Class domination and its spectacle society sharply frustrate, pervert your root potential." Reading such lines in a fiction by the editor, it becomes less surprising that this anthology is generally characterized by an inability to mediate social theory and art in any sustained effort at a coherent aesthetic theory, or that it is absolutely unclear about its own social roots. Baxandall invokes Webster against the mass media and inveighs against the "spectacle society;" but his book includes virtually nothing on these crucial social developments. Even the title is almost ambiguous and garbled enough for Madison Avenue. As Baxandall says of the definition of "radical," this kind of failure "is not a quibble" in an anthology on radical aesthetics.

Bart Grahl

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